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GOD *THE* WORSHIPFUL

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GOD *THE* WORSHIPFUL

BY

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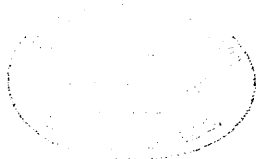
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PREFACE

THE kindly reception accorded to my two previous studies in Christian theism, *The Suffering of the Impassible God* and *The Infinity of God*, has emboldened me to complete the trilogy with this study of God as worshipful.

I hope that the book, which is complete in itself and does not presuppose its predecessors, may appeal not only as an essay in dogmatic theology but also as an aid, however slight, to the quickening of that spirit of worship whereby alone, as I believe, we know both the glory of God and the splendour of humanity.

I am grateful to Dr. C. C. J. Webb whose generous kindness has once again permitted me to profit by the wisdom of his counsel.

It will be noted that I have followed the severe simplicity of the Bible and the Prayer Book in the use of capitals.

BERTRAND R. BRASNETT.

EDINBURGH,

December, 1934.

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I

GOD THE WORSHIPFUL

THE horrible first discovered the worshipful. No records tell of that discovery, nor does tradition enshrine its memory, yet all the evidence points to its occurrence. Imagination must supply the details, but scientific research and cool reflection stand surety for the fact. Perhaps it was as he stood in the cool fresh dawn of a day in spring, with the sunlight glinting on the new green leaves and with the arch of heaven cloudless above his head, that there came to some fierce and shaggy ape-man the first dim consciousness of something or someone, other and greater than himself and arousing in him some strange emotion or sensation hitherto unknown. Doubtless that emotion or sensation was but dim and momentary, yet in that moment man, or the ancestor of man, discovered worship. Repulsive in his habits, horrid in his appearance, only very slightly removed from the animal and the bestial, yet the ape-man had discovered the worshipful, and another step had been taken in the long slow journey that was to separate man from all the beasts of the field.

The discovery once made was never lost, only increased and enriched, and, as in other directions so in his appreciation of the worshipful, the ape-man, as he shed the ape and became more and more the man, grew and developed. New interests occupied his attention, fresh powers delighted him, discoveries hitherto unknown enlarged the range of his personality and the scope of his desires, yet amid all this progress and development the worshipful held him and enthralled him. There were times indeed when he forgot it, when strife and stress and strain so pressed upon him that he gave no thought or attention to anything save the hour's desperate exigencies, yet always soon or late there came something to stir the sleeping spirit and it awoke and, laying all other cares aside, arose and worshipped.

To trace in detail through the ages the long story of the hold of the worshipful upon the spirit of man would be a task requiring vast learning and many volumes, and we have no intention of attempting it ; ours is the more modest task of analysis and dissection. Accepting the general positions of Christian theism and the idea of God as commonly understood therein, we desire to attempt a careful and reverent analysis of the nature of God as worshipful, or, to put it slightly differently, we wish to understand why it is that the God of Christianity evokes, and, as we believe, rightly evokes, the worship of Christian men. Clearly such an enquiry is one of some magnitude, and we may perhaps best begin to open up the intricacies of our subject by noting certain properties or qualities which men require to be present in that which is to be accounted worshipful.

(a) THE LIVING GOD

Probably the most fundamental of these qualities or properties is the presence of life. Worshippers require that the worshipful shall be living. It is no doubt true that in primitive worship the life thus required is very vaguely conceived. The savage, for whom some strangely-shaped tree or stone becomes tabu and henceforth an object of respectful veneration, has no clear or definite idea of the kind of life that he imagines to reside in the object of his awe. But life of a sort is unquestionably there. The tree or stone or other object of veneration is an uncertainty, it has an initiative of its own ; unless properly treated and cajoled, it may act in alarming and disquieting ways. No doubt the savage does not regard this life in the worshipful object as in all respects similar to his own life ; no doubt, too, to the scientific Western investigator the so-called life seems more akin to some power or force such as electricity ; but to the savage the object of his veneration is alive in the primary and fundamental sense that it reacts as if alive to the conduct of its worshipper. The savage does not distinguish between things which are alive and things which in fact are not alive but react as if they were. When he begins to draw that distinction he is ceasing to be a savage,

and much that he has hitherto found worshipful is becoming powerless to evoke awe or adoration.

So soon as any religion has achieved some measure of development it is of course consciously recognised that the object of its worship must be living. The corollary is also recognised, that that which is dead is not worshipful. One need only quote in illustration the constant insistence in the Old Testament that Jehovah is a living God and that the gods of the heathen are not alive but dead and, as dead, worthy of no man's worship. All religions alike recognise that to worship that which is dead is foolishness. It is indeed true that ancestor-worship has been an important part of many religions and that ancestors are unquestionably dead. But they are not worshipped as dead. It may be that all that they receive in some forms of so-called ancestor-worship is pious commemoration and the payment of due honour to their memories; but if more is vouchsafed to them than this and actual worship offered not merely in their honour but to them, then their worshippers conceive them as in some sense alive. This is a truth which is established not merely *a posteriori* by the comparative study of religions, but also *a priori* by the researches of psychology, for it is a psychological impossibility for a worshipper to worship that which he himself believes to be in no sense alive.

Nor can the statement, that any developed religion recognises that the object of its worship must be living, be refuted by pointing out that there have been religions which have not possessed a living object of worship. Buddhism in its more primitive form and as subsequently set forth by the more philosophic of its adherents is a religion without a living object of worship. But then it is open to question whether Buddhism of this type has any object of worship at all. Its interests are much more moral than religious; it is primarily a way of life and a moral code, and it so interprets the meaning of life that little or no place is left for worship. It is true that man's desire to worship could not long be suppressed and was strong enough to change considerably the original character of Buddhism; but the very change is evidence of the truth of our contention, for those whom the

Buddhist came to worship were certainly not accounted lifeless.

In partially developed religions the life of the object of worship is thought of as akin to the life of the worshipper though in many ways superior to it. This can be seen, for instance, in the more primitive parts of the Old Testament and in Greek and Roman religion in their less developed form. Jehovah walks in the garden in the cool of the day or comes from Sinai to fight for his people in the desperate struggle against Sisera ; whilst the gods and goddesses of Olympus spend their immortality in what may perhaps be described without overmuch unkindness to god or man as a very human but somewhat unprincipled round of banquets and benevolence, indifference and intrigue. But at least they lived, and whilst they lived men worshipped them. Later the pure in heart took in hand in the interests of morals the deities of Greece and Rome, and the philosophers dealt with them in the interests of abstract thought ; and in the twofold process those deities were very much refined, so much refined in fact that they could no longer live, and being dead, they found no worshippers. Jehovah too had to undergo a change of mind and heart before the deity of the primitive Israelites could be adequate to the needs and desires of later Judaism ; but, partly because he was his people's only god, he stood the transition better than the gods of Greece and Rome ; yet no one, who is familiar with the theology of later Judaism, with its tendency to make God ever more and more remote from man, can shut his eyes to the fact that there was at least a risk that the morally crude but intensely virile god of early Israel would be exalted to an atmosphere so rarefied that life therein would be difficult for himself and impossible for all his worshippers.

In a fully developed religion such as Christianity there is clear recognition that the life of God is other and greater than the life of man. The Christian worshipper is well aware not only that God lives but that he lives with a quality and intensity of life such as are not known to man. It is the supreme quality of the divine life that in part evokes the worship of man. For the life of God is not only without beginning and without end, it is also a self-supporting and a

self-contained life of quite literally the highest worth. Man's life is a derived life, derived not merely in the sense that he owes his existence to his parents, but derived in the more fundamental sense that neither he nor they can come into being, or continue to be, without the creative and conserving power of God. Man's is a borrowed existence, man lives because God lives, and if God ceased man would cease also. But the process is not reversible. The extinction of man is not the death of God ; though man vanished, God would remain. Further the cessation of man would be powerless to affect in any way the quality of the divine life. That would continue in its fullness if man ceased to be, just as it existed in its fullness before man came into existence. For the divine life is, as we said, a self-supporting and a self-contained life.

It is vital for worship to recognise that the life of God is an underived life, self-supporting and self-contained, for it is impossible to worship a being whose existence is not self-originated. It is of course true that throughout the past and in many parts of the world to-day men have worshipped, and are worshipping, objects which no educated mind could regard as self-originated. But these objects are regarded by their worshippers, so far as they are capable of reflecting upon the matter at all, as in some sense self-existent ; and for the instructed religious consciousness it is impossible to worship any object which does not possess its being in its own right. The reason for this impossibility is that man is so constituted that he can only find perfect peace and rest in that which is ultimate. He can use and enjoy much that is not ultimate ; for long periods he can even be content with the secondary and derived ; it is possible for him to be negligent in the quest of the ultimate and to allow his power to appreciate it to become partially, perhaps entirely, atrophied through neglect ; yet, at his highest and his best, man withholds the supreme tribute that he has it in his power to pay, the tribute of worship, from any object that possesses a secondary and derived existence. Man worships the creator, not the created.

Also it is important to note that the creator who is worshipped by the instructed Christian is the ultimate fount and

source of all being. It is necessary to emphasise this because the frequent use at the present day of the noun 'creator', and still more of the adjective 'creative', makes it easy to forget that, in strictness, no one except God is a creator or does creative work. It is true, of course, that many men make things that are new, things of a pattern or form or type that have not been seen before. The recollection that French, unlike English, possesses two adjectives for 'new' and by their aid distinguishes between the 'absolutely new' and the 'new to us', may warn us that many 'new' things are only new to their maker and perhaps to his immediate environment. None the less it is unquestionable that men have from time to time produced, and are still producing, things which are absolutely new in the sense that no man has seen their like before. Yet even these absolutely new things do not entitle those who made or fashioned them to call themselves, or to be called, creators. For these new things, wonderful though they often are, are only a rearrangement or refashioning of already existing materials.

This is sufficiently obvious as regards the works of men's hands; it is worth noting that it is equally true of the products of their minds. Clearly enough the sculptor's statue is a refashioning of already existing marble, and the architect's house an arrangement of already existing bricks and slates, pieces of wood and panes of glass. Less obviously but equally truly the ideas that preceded the statue or the house were not absolutely new ideas; they were re-arrangements, re-thinkings of former ideas, themselves derived from experiences which had contained in them a considerable element of the given; and they were in consequence by no means the product simply of the thinker's mind. Even if however we press our analysis further and insist that there is in man's mental life an element of absolute newness, it is hardly open to the Christian theist to hold that the absolute quality of this newness extends without limits. The epoch-making thought of a Newton or a Kant in the past, or of an Einstein in our own day, has had in it, unquestionably, that which was absolutely new in the sense that no human being had thought of it before. But for Christian theism at least it

was not new in the sense that it was utterly underived. It was not thought that arose *ex nihilo*, it was thought that was rooted and grounded in God. We are not at this point concerned with the serious problems that might be raised as to how thought that is rooted and grounded in God can ever be false, or why man does not possess the complete wisdom of God, we are simply concerned to point out that, for Christian theology, all human thought depends upon the divine being. Man thinks because God lives and, if words are used strictly, God is the only original thinker.

We may carry our analysis a little further. Not only does man's existence and with it man's power to think depend upon the life of God but man thinks most truly when he, as it is often put, 'thinks God's thoughts after him'. But to think another's thoughts, even if that other be God, whilst it may secure true thoughts, certainly condemns one to thoughts that are not absolutely new. They are secondary and derived thoughts and, as such, are appropriate enough to one whose very being is also secondary and derived. Man only thinks originally when he thinks wrongly, and the greater his error the more original his thinking. The 'original sin' of technical theology has of course its own special meaning, but the phrase may serve to remind us that man is most truly original when he sins and is by that very fact farthest removed from the life of God. If we may accept for the sake of argument the traditional account of the Devil it would probably be right to regard the Prince of Darkness as the most original thinker of all time, as one whose thoughts were new thoughts which showed by their very newness that they were alien to the mind and life of God. As, however, we shall have further opportunity to consider the relation of the mind of man to the mind of God when we come to regard the rational or intellectual element in the worshipful, we need not pursue the subject further here, merely noting that in thought as elsewhere man is no true creator. When, whether in thought or deed, he is most original he is, in a profound sense, creating *ex nihilo*, for he is creating from that which is devoid of being just because it has no place in the life and mind of God. His creations may endure for a season in a world of time and space, but they are destined to perish

quickly even there, and they can have neither part nor lot in the kingdom of eternity.

God then for the Christian theist is alone creative, and God is alone creative because God alone is Life. His life is uncaused and self-sustained, it is infinite, boundless and free. Life such as this is evocative of worship in all to whom it is given to understand it, and man is of the number of those who have power to comprehend. Man, whose own existence is hurried and short, who knows not at the dawn whether he will be alive at sunset, and who is painfully conscious that few things are more certain than his death, is ready to pay his homage to One ' who lives for aye '. As the Christian contemplates the life of the eternal Trinity, a life alike self-sustained and self-contained, he is conscious that his gaze rests not merely upon the highest form of life known as yet, but upon life in its absolute and unqualified perfection, upon the life of which all other lives are faint and shadowy reproductions. In the presence of the life of God man is before the fount of his being, and as he views the Original and Undeived he bows himself and worships.

(b) THE POWERFUL GOD

We may take power as the second quality or property required in that which is to be an object of men's worship. It is innate in man that he admires power. In primitive times no doubt power is primitively conceived and men admire in others, and desire for themselves, that physical prowess and capacity for leadership that will guarantee success in strife and struggle and which will ensure that they are not ashamed ' when they speak with their enemies in the gate '. Advancing civilisation develops and refines the idea of power and though the element of physical prowess is probably never wholly lost or discarded, there are added to it mental and spiritual prowess. In fully developed civilisations these are set on a definitely higher level than mere strength of body ; and for all religions that have passed beyond the primitive, spiritual power claims as of right the highest place. Mental and bodily power are not despised or rejected, but they attain their highest worth when they are the ex-

pression at the level of mind or body of the upward striving of the spirit of man. It may be that power of body or mind is for some unattainable yet no Christian can hold that these have lost the one thing needful ; but if any be without spiritual power that man, no matter how great his strength of body or of mind, is devoid of the one essential possession and is a figure of pathetic impotence to those who see him with the eyes of God.

Now because at the human level men recognise that power of spirit is much more important than power of mind, and vastly more important than power of body, it follows that physical power or even to some extent mental power are not essential elements in power at its highest and its best. In other words the Christian who is prepared to pay his tribute of loving respect to those who are spiritually strong, though physically weak and not dowered with mental riches, is gladly content also to worship a God whose power is primarily spiritual and not mental or physical. We must, however, be careful lest, in our eagerness to give the things of the spirit the foremost place, we do less than justice to mental and material things. It will therefore be well at this point to attempt an analysis of the power of God, as that power is understood by Christian theism, noting in particular those of its features that are specially fitted to evoke the worship of man.

The most obvious example of the divine power was the creation of the material universe, and not less wonderful or awe-inspiring is the conservation in existence of that universe when created. We need not trouble ourselves with the problem of the relation of time to creation, for, whether the creation was in time or with time, the existence of the material universe is equally marvellous to the mind of man and, if he holds it to be the work of a personal Creator, equally evocative of his awe and his worship. It is of course a commonplace to insist that the wonder of the universe has been vastly increased in this generation by the discoveries of physical science, themselves largely due to improvements in the manufacture of microscopes and telescopes. It is, however, perhaps doubtful whether these discoveries of science have really been as evocative of man's

worship as has sometimes been supposed. They have put before us a universe vastly greater in its extension and almost infinitely more minute in its composition than was hitherto supposed, and for the convinced theist the power of God in creation has been greatly magnified ; but for weaker spirits the very immensity and minuteness of created things may have a paralysing effect until they find it harder, instead of easier, to believe in a Creator-God by whom all things both great and small are created and sustained. In certain moods men may find it very difficult to believe that the Creator really cares in any definite sense either for the millions of vast and lifeless stars or for the millions of fish-eggs, living but minute, that are to be found in the oceans of the one small planet upon which we live. At such times the prodigality of God in creation may be less evocative of worship than of unbelief.

The Christian theist would doubtless reply and, as we believe, rightly reply, that to be oppressed by the multitude of created things is in part an infirmity of man's mind which is overwhelmed by the multitude of data, and in part an infirmity of his spirit which, weighed down by the material, fails to rise to triumphant comprehension of the spiritual source of created things. Yet even so there is a deeper criticism that can be brought against those who would have us filled with the spirit of worship as we contemplate the universe. Even when we have granted that the universe is not the product of blind material forces but the manifestation of self-conscious will, it is not obvious that it should forthwith evoke our worship. It is perfectly possible to regard the universe as created and yet not to feel an irresistible urge to fall down and adore its Creator. No doubt there is much in the universe that can and does arouse in us the spirit of worship. The immense distances of space, the stars serenely gliding on their way, the beauties of mountain and sea, field and valley, the laughter of children, maternal love, these things stir the spirit of man and constrain him to adore the Creator who called them into being. Moreover the catalogue of the things that evoke in man a readiness to worship might be almost indefinitely extended. As our scientific and material interests in the universe are not

identical, so also the features of its being that prompt man to worship vary with the individual. As with the food of the body one man's meat is another's poison, so it is with the food of the spirit, and that which nourishes and feeds the devotion of one leaves another hungry and unfed. But so vast is the range of created things and so manifold their diversity, that those are indeed few in number who do not find much in the universe that arouses in them at the least a sense of the numinous, and at the highest the spirit of a worship that is consciously directed towards a personal Creator.

But the universe would evoke the worship of man more deeply and more surely, were it not that there is much in the universe which puzzles, distresses, and even crushes man's spirit. Here, as in the things which call man to adore, there is diversity. We are not all oppressed or troubled by the same features in the universe, though there are few or no thoughtful souls who are not conscious of some features in the universe that for them are barriers and hindrances to worship. This is not to say that they are correct in their interpretation of these features ; it is possible enough that, with more acute understanding and a livelier faith, we should be untroubled by features of the universe that now make it difficult for us to worship ; but, whilst we are as we are, there are few of us who could not point to this or that feature in our experience of created things which for us at least makes worship difficult. The enormous amount of pain in the animal world, for instance, hinders the worship of many. Qualify that pain as we will, belittle its severity compared with human pain, urge that it is not anticipated before it comes nor remembered when it is past, yet, when every qualification is made and somewhat dubious statements positively asserted, for many sensitive souls a world, in which species preys on species and there is a vast amount of severe and prolonged animal pain, is slow to evoke the spirit of worship.

Human pain, in spite of its wide existence and often acute severity, is for many less of an obstacle to worship because it is more spiritually intelligible than animal pain. When pain comes to an animal, so far as we can observe, the animal's

reaction to that pain is only on the physical and material level. No doubt at that level the pain may sometimes be profitable. The sharp blows of the first few falling stones may enable an animal to spring clear of a landslide, or the slight but tearing touch of the claws of the pursuing lion may act as a bloody spur to the fleeing stag and enable him to achieve a burst of speed that will carry him to safety. But, so far as we can see, the reaction of animals to pain can only be at the level of material existence, and when, as is so often the case, the pain is the pain of a slow or swift bodily dissolution it appears to human eyes a futile pain, just because the animal who endures it cannot in any way use it to his profit. Doubtless this is not the whole of the matter. It is conceivable for instance that the pain, which for the animals that bear it is, and must be, meaningless, may have its justification in some compensatory advantage it confers upon their slayers, or even as a testing and trying of human faith, but these are not points which concern us now. Our immediate interest is to show that the animal pain of the world, and any similar pain that there may be elsewhere in the universe, is not directly evocative of human worship, and is indeed often a hindrance and obstacle thereto, just because, if it serves spiritual ends at all, it seems to serve them so distantly and in so roundabout a fashion.

With human pain it is otherwise because the pain can be and often is both for the sufferer himself, and through him for others, a source of spiritual gain. With men, as with animals, pain may be profitable at the physical level. Pain is a warning that there is something amiss with the material organism, and thanks to the warning, man may be able to save himself from more serious physical disaster, or even from that supreme material collapse which we call death. But man, unlike the animals, does not react to pain merely at the bodily or physical level. The pain of his body touches man's mind and soul, and because he is in pain he becomes a better or a worse man. In relation to pain man possesses what the animals do not, an element of spontaneity and, just because man can in a real degree determine the effect of pain upon himself, human suffering can be evocative of worship in a way that animal suffering can never be. To say

this is not to assume that human suffering is always salutary in its effects. Often it is not. A man may be soured and embittered by pain, becoming jaundiced in his outlook and cynical in his judgments. But, save in so far as this degeneration of spirit is the direct and inevitable consequence of disease attacking the brain or some vital organ, the deterioration of the sufferer is his own fault, a disaster for which he himself is to be held responsible. And over against those whom illness makes worse men and women than they were before may be set those sufferers, and their numbers are not small, who are purified and refined by pain, not automatically or without effort, but by the free reaction of their human spirit to this trial and testing. In the presence of such men and women it is easy to worship their Creator, for they reveal that material and physical things are powerless to injure the God-given spirit of man, and that their fiercest assaults can be used by him for the glory of his Maker.

It may be well, as we consider the power of created things to evoke the spirit of worship, to note a certain element of inconsistency at times apparent in man's attitude towards the universe in which he finds himself. The kind of attitude we have in mind is mainly to be found in the sincere believer, and it shows itself in a tendency to fasten the attention upon the more obviously benevolent aspects of the divine providence, and to ignore features in the universe which at the first sight certainly seem baneful and injurious. Thus there are those who wax lyrical over God's wonderful care for the birds, in that he gives them that marvellous instinct whereby so many of them, as the seasons vary, migrate vast distances to more suitable feeding or breeding grounds. And yet it is also true that of the migrating birds hundreds dash themselves to death against the lanterns of lighthouses, hundreds more are slain by a variety of foes, and yet other hundreds perish of exhaustion before their journey is completed. Or there are those who in glad singleness of heart make a thank-offering to God for deliverance from a storm at sea or from some grave illness on the land, forgetful apparently that he who calmed the sea had first lashed it to a fury, or that he who checked the microbes' onward march had first led them into battle.

It will be worth while to note both the strength and the weakness of the attitude we have outlined. Let us take its weakness first. Its weakness is that it is unscientific ; much relevant evidence is ignored and conclusions are in consequence based upon insufficient data. The scientist, just in proportion as he is worthy of the name, is anxious to marshal every relevant fact and to come to no conclusion until all the available evidence is before him. The practical exigencies alike of life and of research may often compel him to formulate conclusions before he is certain that he has all the data at his disposal, and these conclusions may in fact be overthrown in the light of further evidence. But the scientist parts with them without regret, for his interest in them ceases so soon as he discovers that they are inadequate to the facts. His one aim is so to formulate his theories that they do justice to all the evidence. Similarly with philosophy; there is no need to labour the point that the philosopher aims at a completely comprehensive view of all that is. He may not yet have attained it, but he is perfectly aware that his only hope of attaining it lies in a determined attempt to omit nothing that is true.

As it is with science and philosophy so it must be with worship. Worship that is to be securely based cannot rest on that which is partial, and that which is partial cannot evoke worship in its perfection. It is probable enough that worship cannot hope to reach its highest and fullest form until science and philosophy have, so far as may be, completed their enquiries ; and until that day arrives worship will best defend itself from an irrational obscurity by loyal acceptance of all the secure results of philosophy and science. Worship is never as adequate as it might be unless it has taken into account every available fact. To that extent, therefore, there is justification for condemning those who, consciously or unconsciously, base their worship upon a prejudiced selection of the facts, content to discard any that militate, or seem to militate, against what they would fain believe.

On the other hand we must be careful to do justice to the strength of the attitude which is inclined to select its facts to fit its conclusions. So far as that attitude can be justified it

is in relation to the practical living of life. No scientist or philosopher may legitimately choose the facts that will establish the theories for which he has a preference whilst he ignores unfavourable evidence, though he may, of course, with perfect propriety confine himself for a season to a particular line of enquiry or field of research. But it is to be noted that even in science and philosophy, though all facts are relevant, some facts are more illuminating, reveal more of the ultimate texture of reality, than others. In the life of ordinary men the same truth holds. In our journey through life we encounter many facts, all of them have a certain relevance to our journey, but some are richly significant for the meaning of our pilgrimage and others shed but little light upon either its purpose or its path. Accordingly it would be the wisdom of a busy pilgrim, who lacked perhaps both time and gifts perpetually to survey the innumerable facts of life, to fasten his attention chiefly upon the facts that shed the brightest light upon the path and which were most richly pregnant with the world's interpretation.

Considerations such as the above do much to justify the convinced believer who is inclined to fix his gaze upon the facts that seem to confirm his faith. Just because he is now a convinced believer we may legitimately assume that, according to his ability and opportunity, he has faced the riddle of existence and become convinced that its answer is to be found in the system of belief which now he holds. But because life with its thronging claims and duties presses urgently upon him he cannot be for ever re-examining the grounds of his belief. He has made his choice carefully and conscientiously and, having once made it, the exigencies of living justify him in allowing the position he has adopted to become something of a fixed idea which he does not re-examine but seeks merely to confirm and strengthen. He is perfectly aware both that there are unbelievers who do not hold his faith and who will overthrow it if they can, and also that there are those whose professional responsibility and bent of mind alike lead them constantly to re-think and re-examine the tenets of his faith. Surely in the circumstances he is largely, perhaps entirely, justified if, settled in his faith, he henceforth selects from life the facts that strengthen

creed. After all, if his settled convictions are truly grounded, the facts that he selects are the important facts, the facts that really illumine and reveal, the facts that pierce into the nature of reality ; and a few of these facts are of more value for the living of life, and more evocative of that worship which is life's supreme activity, than whole multitudes of facts that are less pregnant in their significance. Finally, if our believer's convictions rest upon a lie and lack a sure basis in reality, it is certain that soon or late life will be too much for faith and the facts of existence shatter the falsities of creed. When this happens the worship that was offered to the false will either entirely cease or find its perfect object in the true.

It is both a corollary of the Christian doctrine of creation and, for those who hold that doctrine, a striking proof of the power of God that the universe soon or late proves hostile to those who fail to understand its true character as the work of God, or neglect to satisfy the requirements that the universe by its very constitution imposes upon those who inhabit it. It will be convenient to confine our attention to that very tiny part of the physical universe, the world upon which we live, simply because our knowledge of our own world is so much fuller and more detailed than our knowledge of the worlds scattered in the vast distances of space ; but much of what we have to say would be applicable, with necessary modifications, to those remoter worlds.

There are those who are fond of saying that the world is a hard place and the fact, of which the biologists assure us, that it is strewn with the wreckage of thousands of extinct species, at least makes it plain that many have found it a place in which it was difficult to continue to live. Changes in climate, changes in the earth's surface in part, but only in part, due to the changes in climate, the implacable hostility of foes of many kinds, these and other factors have destroyed thousands of creatures of every type and swept them from the face of the earth. To be unable to change with the changing times has been to perish and there is no evidence to suggest that it will be otherwise in the future.

It will be interesting to enquire whether man's worship is more readily evoked by the contemplation of the age-long

struggle that results always in the survival of the fittest, or by the contemplation of the supposed creation of special species existing now and believed to have existed from the beginning. There is something satisfying in the thought of a creator who by his fiat produces a world of great complexity indeed but well-balanced and proportioned, a world in which the rival claims and interests of innumerable creatures are so happily balanced that they are thought to maintain indefinitely the ratio to one another that has existed from the first. Clearly a God who created after this fashion would be a God both of power and wisdom, wise in design and powerful in execution. Such a God would tend to evoke worship in created beings able to apprehend his power and wisdom. Worship thus evoked would not of itself be Christian worship; to make it that other factors would have to exert their influence, but it might well be an integral element in Christian worship, for no worship, whether Christian or non-Christian, has a really adequate object for its adoring unless that object can be conceived as a supreme creator and a sovereign disposer. Qualities and properties other and greater than these are required to evoke the full Christian worship, but nothing less than these could be expected to stir to worship the heart of any instructed theist.

On the other hand there is something startlingly impressive about the history of the world as science now commonly understands it. The Christian theist holds man to be the crown and culmination of the creative process, and there is something awe-inspiring and heart-searching in the reflection that the creator took so long a period to consummate his work. When we survey the vast æons of time in which the world existed, but existed without man, when we remember the long ages of the evolutionary process, the myriad types of creature that have come into being, had their day and vanished for ever from the scene, when finally we recall the slow gropings, the toilsome struggles, the blood and sweat and tears whereby man, when once he had appeared upon the world, has struggled up to such security and pre-eminence as now are his, we cannot but be stirred with a sense of awe and veneration towards the great being whose purposes are so slowly but with such almost terrible sureness

brought to pass. Again, as before, such awe and veneration are not in themselves the full worship of Christianity, but, logically considered, they are a fitting prelude thereto, and, in actual fact, an organic part therein.

It is not easy to say which more readily checks the spirit of worship, whether belief in a special creation, or belief in a world whose present condition is the outcome of an evolutionary process. Both beliefs offer difficulties to a thoughtful mind. It is easy to be impressed, if one believes in a special creation, at the marvellous adaptations of means to ends that there are in the world of nature, the claws of the tiger, for instance, so admirably fitted to be out of the way for walking and to be very much in the way when required for catching or holding. Or our wonder may be stirred by the web of the spider so well calculated both to yield to the breeze and to hold fast the prey. We marvel, if we believe in a special creation, at the wondrous wisdom of the great designer who planned not only these but many other adaptations of equal aptness ; and it is only when our wonder has somewhat run its course that we think also of those whom the tiger's claws catch and rend, or the spider's web holds fast that its spinner may devour them, and then the spirit of worship begins to die within us, for we cannot bow our heads in honour of the cruel. Cruel gods have been worshipped at many periods of the world's history and are worshipped to-day on not a few portions of the earth's surface ; but with all their faults and failings the most highly civilised nations do not consciously make obeisance to a cruel god. Their citizens might fear a cruel creator, they might seek in divers ways to propitiate and appease him, but they would not, because they could not, offer him the supreme tribute of man's spirit, worship. If men are to worship a creator in whose created world there are, or at least seem to be, much cruelty and needless suffering and pain, they must have received convincing demonstration that such cruelty and distress are not a true expression of the mind and purpose of God.

On the other hand those who accept, as most educated persons now do accept, the interpretation of the earth's history that is given us by science have their own difficulties.

They are troubled and distressed by what appears to be the appalling wastage and carnage of long æons of time. Nor is their difficulty really resolved by suggestions that what appears to us as a vast period of time may in the end prove to be but a tiny fraction of the whole history of the earth. Such arguments ignore the individual and forget that another's future bliss cannot by itself justify the suffering and agony of some long-perished creature or species. A man may give himself willingly to suffer and to die if by his agony and death he can bring nearer the realisation of a glorious ideal for whose advent he counts no price too high, and in such circumstances we may count that the glory of the future atones for the present's anguish and distress. But we only reason thus when he who suffers is a voluntary victim, who suffers with open eyes and a willing heart that he may gain a blessing for his people. Even so we may feel that a world that can require such sacrifices is a world not altogether devoid of cruelty. But no arguments of this kind can even begin to justify the deaths of myriads of living creatures who have died and are dying, with no vision of the purpose that their deaths fulfil, that other creatures, animal and human, may survive and carry forward the evolutionary process for a period which none can specify and to a goal of which none has knowledge. From certain points of view the evolutionary process, viewed simply as a fact of science and apart from religious pre-suppositions and qualifications, is intensely gloomy and depressing, is in no way evocative of the spirit of worship, and is a very dubious testimony to the capacity or worth of any creative power that may be supposed to lie behind it.

Nor are we any longer left with the substantial comfort that an earlier generation found in their belief in progress. When one could regard the evolutionary process as, in some way not clearly explained, always productive of the better and steadily moving forward to the best one could view with a certain measure of equanimity those who fell by the way. They, after all, perished because they were not worthy to survive, they vacated the world's stage in order that more worthy actors might take their place ; it was sad that they had to go, but it would have been still sadder if they had

remained, for their continuance in existence would have delayed the onward march of progress. This belief in a kind of universal and continuous progress, which too often confounded the physical ability to survive with moral worthiness, has now for some time been known to be fallacious ; and man is once more remembering what he knew long ago but for a season forgot, that if there is to be progress at any level above the physical, it must be toiled and striven for, and, when won, carefully guarded lest it be no sooner won than lost, and also that even at the physical level progress will often come most quickly to those who bend mind and will to its attaining.

The thought of the uncertainty of progress can both stimulate and paralyse effort. On the one hand we are conscious that unless we bestir ourselves we shall not advance but decline. This truth is plain enough in the regions of mind and spirit. Here triumph comes to those alone who are prepared for sacrifice and hardness ; the easy paths never lead to the heights of mental and spiritual attainment but only to the low-lying valleys where there is neither the wide vision nor the bracing zest of the mountaintops. Even at the level of physical existence there must be activity if there is to be survival. Many creatures, both large and very small, contend with us for the occupation of the earth and it is quite imaginable, as scientists have pointed out, that some tiny microbe may yet add man to the wreckage of the extinct species that strew the earth, and, even if we choose to regard such a thought as fantastic and unlikely to be realised, it is clear enough that it is only by constant care in a variety of ways that man secures even his continuance in physical existence. By brain rather than by brawn man has won his way to domination over those who contend with him for the mastery of the earth, and, if through any cause sloth should creep over the mind of man in the ages to come, it is probable enough that those whom his mental alertness now holds at bay will overwhelm him and sweep him from the earth.

Yet though there is all this stimulus to effort man is in fact paralysed by the ruthlessness of the physical and material universe. Apart from such a rather remote possi-

bility as the earth's utter destruction by collision with some as yet unknown planet rushing in from the vast distances of space, there is little evidence that the earth has any special sympathy for man and his hopes and fears ; and there is abundant evidence that if man ignores the laws of earthly existence and physical well-being he will pay to the uttermost farthing. At the material level there is no forgiveness and no extenuating circumstance, and the attitude of the will counts for nothing. The doctor or missionary who goes to the fever-ridden swamp or the leper-colony in an effort to bring salvation to the bodies or souls of those who dwell there will soon fall a victim to illness and probably lose his life unless he can meet disease at its own level and has material antidotes for physical ills. Nor is there any need to draw our illustrations from pestilential climes or savage lands to show that the laws of physical well-being are indifferent to motive and inflexible in their operation. In our own land the loving but unwise or inexperienced mother who brings up her baby on unsuitable foods or in undesirable ways, lays up for him a legacy of physical weakness and pain which he will inherit to the uttermost farthing.

We may draw our illustrations of the ruthlessness of the natural world from a wider field. The scientific investigator questing eagerly for some great benefit to men may unwittingly ignore some precaution or rule upon which his own health and safety depend. In suffering and pain he pays for his error ; he meant well but that fact makes no appearance in this balance sheet, he pays for his ignorance or his blunder at precisely the same physical rate at which he would have paid had he erred whilst seeking to discover some deadly poison or loathsome disease which should wipe out the race of men. The uncertainty of life, which we all recognise, is largely due to the inflexible ruthlessness with which the material world punishes the slightest disregard of the laws that govern life at the physical level. A genius vanishes from the world of time and space because just for a moment he forgot that it is unwise to smoke near a petrol tank, a saint is no more seen upon the earth because, engaged in pious exercises, he omitted to watch the traffic.

Now it cannot be denied that the inevitability with which

judgement falls upon those who, wittingly or unwittingly, disregard the laws of physical well-being may easily paralyse initiative and indeed sharply check activity of every kind. Man begins to feel that the universe is unfriendly, he is afraid to move in any direction because his mistakes will be visited with such swift and sure punishment, he becomes inclined to tread the old well-worn path which, though it is neither perfectly safe nor very exhilarating, will at least not expose him to all kinds of unexpected dangers and disasters. In various parts of the earth there are primitive communities whose philosophy of life is roughly that which has just been outlined. Unfortunate disasters, that befell one or two adventurous pioneers, coupled with a more or less innate conservatism have led them to walk in the old paths and to suppress with firmness any attempt to depart therefrom. Yet they also are destroyed by the earth they have tried to please. Immobile and inert they fail to adapt themselves to a changing environment and sometimes slowly, sometimes swiftly, they are crushed out of existence. Such is the fate of many unprogressive tribes and races in various parts of the earth at the present day, and we may reasonably expect the process to be much accelerated by the growing speed of means of communication and by the consequent shrinking of the earth.

The maintenance of physical existence both for the individual and for the race is not easy and it cannot be secured by standing still. There must be movement, and movement, too, is dangerous. Only movement in the right direction can save and there are many wrong directions. In consequence it is not surprising that for many who do not accept the Christian faith the world is a gloomy and dreary place and life a dangerous and irksome enterprise. Even for those who are confidently assured of the truths of Christian theism there is much in the physical universe that baffles and bewilders and sometimes grieves and distresses. If we see nature plainly and see it whole it cannot be said that it calls us at once to fall upon our knees and worship a God of love. An Esquimau tribe dying wholesale from the tuberculosis that some trader has brought, a coloured race in the tropics decimated by the measles or scarlet-fever that have

come with the missionaries, may be consistent with the existence of the God whom Christians commonly proclaim ; but it can hardly be asserted that the contemplation of these tragedies and others similar to them is likely by itself to evoke a spirit of worship.

It is possible indeed to lighten the strain imposed upon faith by nature's ruthlessness by certain considerations. In the first place we have to realise the difficulties that would arise if nature's laws were not unswerving and inflexible. We are horrified when some little child goes too near the fire and is burned to death yet, if fire sometimes burned and sometimes did not, it is probable that there would be far more disasters from fire than there are now. It is just because the dangerous and deadly in the material world are always dangerous and deadly that we learn to beware of them and that any real safety becomes possible. Indeed it is only in proportion as things are consistently true to their nature that any organised life becomes possible. Conduct, in the sense of systematised behaviour, is only possible in a world where material things can be relied upon to be stable. If for instance cyanide of potassium were sometimes deadly poison to man and sometimes a refreshing summer drink, and if there were a like uncertainty with regard to all other solids and liquids, not merely would the science of chemistry or the practice of medicine become impossible, but the art of the hotel-keeper and the trade of the grocer would either cease or become the maddest meaningless guesswork.

It is important to notice that conduct and organised life only become impossible when there is a real instability in things themselves. Systematisation of life is not made impossible by uncertainty of knowledge when such uncertainty is recognised for what it is. Provided that in certain regions man's knowledge is sure, he may be inconvenienced but he is not rendered entirely helpless by a lack of certainty in other directions. In those directions he behaves as one who is conscious of the existence of alternatives. It is only if things themselves have no stable nature that conduct becomes impossible, and that man is reduced either to complete inactivity or to action which cannot be called conduct, because it is based upon no principles and envisages no definite result.

The point we are making can be illustrated from our relations to our fellow men. There are those amongst them whom we can get to know well and whose general conduct and behaviour we find readily intelligible. We should be disposed to say of them that we can be sure of them, meaning by this that we so understand their natures and the principles by which they guide their lives that in a great many possible sets of circumstances we could predict their behaviour with confidence. But there are also other people of whom, though we have known them a long time, we feel we can never be sure. Rightly or wrongly we account them unstable and impulsive, as likely to be influenced by any whim or fancy, and in consequence as persons upon whose conduct it is impossible to rely and in relation to whom guesswork can be our only guide. If we ourselves and all our fellow-men were of this type it is easy to see how wildly uncertain all attempts at organised corporate life would become, and how great would be the resulting chaos and confusion. Similar anarchy and uncertainty would bear sway in the world of material things if they all lacked inherent stability and possessed an element of uncertainty as part of the essence of their being.

It is an interesting speculation to enquire whether a divine creator, such as is postulated by Christian theism, might not have effected a closer relationship between the world of nature and the world of morals than now seems to exist, and whether such a relationship might not more readily have evoked man's worship than the present somewhat indefinite connection between the material and the moral. But before beginning this enquiry it may be well to make our peace at the outset with those who are either doubtful of its legitimacy or who are quite certain of its illegitimacy. We may agree with them that to speak of God in isolation from the world is to speak abstractly. It is true that we have no experience either of God in separation from the world or of the world in separation from God. In our experience they have always co-existed. Experientially we do not even know that they could exist apart. If we hold, as most Christian theists do hold and as the orthodox tradition certainly affirms, that God is quite independent of the world and can exist, and has existed, without the world we must recognise that this

position is the fruit of argument not of direct experience. The world as it is is definite and concrete, something given us in sensible experience ; the world as it might be is a theoretical construction incapable of practical verification. Similarly, what God has done and is doing is a matter of direct experience ; what God might have done in the past, or might do now or in the future, may be a matter for pious argument and reverent speculation, but it is assuredly not something immediately verifiable in experience. Nor is the distinction we have drawn rendered nugatory by the reflection that in what we have called sensible or direct experience there is normally a definitely rational element. Sense experience which is merely sense experience remains unintelligible until reason enters to interpret it and to co-ordinate it with the rest of life. Yet even so there is a real and readily perceptible difference between God and the world as actually experienced and God and the world as reason and imagination may reconstruct them in speculative enquiry.

With this candid acknowledgment that we shall be dealing with abstractions rather than with the concrete reality of actual experience we may proceed to our proposed investigation as to whether the divine creator, as understood in Christian theism, might not have effected a closer relationship between the world of nature and the world of morals than now seems to exist. It will be well to explicate a little the kind of relationship we have in mind. It is a relationship in which the material would be responsive and amenable to the good, but stubborn and intractable to the evil. A few examples will make our meaning plain. A good man hurrying on a work of mercy might find his way across a river barred by a broken bridge. The water of the river would be responsive to the goodness of his will, as would his material body, and he would be able to go forward on his way by walking across the river. An evil man on the other hand, hurrying to commit a crime and finding his way similarly barred, would not merely have no power to walk across upon the water, but would find the water grow deeper at the ford when he essayed to cross. Or let us take an example from the scientific laboratory. The good man,

seeking for knowledge in a spirit of loving service and eager to help his fellow-men, would find the materials with which he worked strangely responsive to his investigations and quick to yield their secrets ; whilst the evil man, seeking knowledge in a spirit of selfishness and greed, would find his materials stubborn and obdurate and evasive to his seeking. It would be easy to give other examples, but the above will suffice to illustrate the general position we are developing.

Now admittedly that general position and the examples by which we have illustrated it have about them an element of speculation and perhaps even of fantasy ; but, before we dismiss them as of no importance, it will be worth while to note how closely in a sense they correspond both to the normal Christian position and to the common experience of ordinary men. No one can deny that some of us understand and are at home with material things in a way quite beyond the power of others, and that as a result of their familiarity and understanding those, thus gifted, achieve in this or that section of the material world results that seem almost incredible to their less able brethren. Normally of course we ascribe this superior success to some special aptitude of mind and brain, but even if we ignore the fact that the brain at least is material, whatever the mind may be, it yet remains true that the success we are considering often depends upon some kind of physical aptitude or dexterity, and results from an almost uncanny co-ordination between man's material body and the material thing or things with which he is concerned. Recognition of this co-ordination can sometimes be found in popular speech. Thus there is an expression sometimes used of gardeners who are particularly successful in bringing their produce to maturity ; it is said of such an one that he has ' growing hands ', the phrase meaning that there is such sympathy and understanding between his hands and the plants and seedlings with which they are concerned that these latter almost invariably thrive and grow.

The main difference between the common view and the position we have somewhat imaginatively sketched is that for the former material things are definitely set and fixed in their own nature and cannot therefore respond with any sort

of initiative of their own, whilst for the latter material things are conceived as being so constituted that they react differently to good and evil. On either view persons and things are able to effect an adjustment and to come into relationship, but for the one view the adjustment is entirely from the human side, on the other view it might be partially from the material side as well. It is hard to say that this latter position is an impossible one for the Christian theist. *A priori* it is not incredible that the creator should have given the material world a constitution such that its reactions took some account of moral distinctions. This result would not in the least require that any or all material things should become self-conscious moral agents. They would still be purely material things entirely devoid of self-consciousness or personality but, owing to the change in their constitution, the laws of science would have to be combined with the laws of morality before they could give an accurate account even of the material world. As now the action of chloroform upon the human body cannot be scientifically defined without taking into account whether the body concerned is the body of a temperate or intemperate person, and temperance is a moral virtue, assessed by moral standards (though having, of course, its consequences in the physical sphere), so, in our imagined universe, the behaviour of material things in relation to man would to some extent depend upon man's morality. It would therefore be necessary in formulating the laws of nature to introduce a kind of cross-reference to the laws of morality, a process not obviously impossible, and one in some respects helping to unify man's view of his world in the same sort of way as increased unity has been secured in physics by the linking together of space and time in the space-time *continuum*.

Nor need it be supposed that it would be much more difficult to formulate the laws of nature in our imagined world than it is in the world as we know it now. In some directions probably it would be, for the introduction of the moral reference would be a complication of which the consequences could not always easily be investigated; but in other directions it is possible enough that the fact, that man and nature were closely knit in a material-moral union,

would introduce an element of simplification at present absent and make both physical science and Christian ethics easier subjects of study than they are now.

In the world that we have imagined, the moral and material worlds would be much more obviously interconnected than they are at present. It is interesting to note certain consequences that would follow. In the world as it is a man's morality may have little or no bearing upon his success in certain branches of research or practical activity. A man, for instance, may be immoral, even grossly immoral, but provided his immorality is not so excessive as to undermine his constitution or destroy his powers of concentration, there is no reason whatever why, if he has the necessary gifts, he should not be in the front rank as a mathematician or as a practical engineer, or be hailed as a genius in astronomy or music. Even if we accept the Christian theistic position in its fullness we can see no reason why the above should not be an accurate analysis of what is possible, and in point of fact history has on occasion demonstrated the truth of our contention.

The situation, however, is somewhat different when we turn our attention to certain other branches alike of theoretical research and practical activity. Because these are less readily isolated from the rest of life neither their investigation nor their practice can be adequately carried on in indifference to the general life of their investigator or exponent. The moral philosopher, for instance, may do his best to be fair to other systems, but his theoretical exposition is bound, and rightly bound, to be coloured by his own beliefs and practice. If it were not so coloured, it would probably be an insincere exposition of his moral creed. Again the pastor or preacher cannot discharge the work to which he believes himself called in isolation from the rest of his living and his thinking. Any attempt to do so at once betrays him into conscious or unconscious insincerity with consequent disaster to his pastoral or homiletic work. Even if we take less obvious examples, and examples less clearly favourable to our own position, and think, for instance, of the shop assistant or commercial traveller, reflection will show us that these also cannot discharge the duties of their

callings with any satisfaction to their self-respect, unless their conduct and behaviour as shop assistant or commercial traveller can be in full accord alike with their beliefs and their practice in other departments of their lives. Here also as in our former examples the moral and the material are intertwined and success cannot be measured by material standards alone, unless indeed it is a deliberate pronouncement of the moral judgement that material standards are supreme. Even then one is measuring, not by material standards, but by material standards plus the conscience, and the moral and the material remain inextricably interwoven.

In our imagined world we assume this interlocking of the material and the moral to have been carried much further than it is in the world we know ; or perhaps it would be truer to say that the interlocking is much more obvious and upon the surface than it is in the world as we know it now. In such a world would it be easier or more difficult to be moral than it is now ? In one very important respect morality would be definitely easier just because morality would be seen, more plainly than is now the case, to be materially successful and satisfactory. It must be recognised that, if we accept the Christian theistic position, morality is always profitable. Not of course that the Christian theist conceives the fruits of morality in any crudely material fashion ; he fully recognises that to be moral may in certain circumstances involve him in the loss of all material possessions and perhaps also in physical suffering and death. None the less the Christian theist must maintain that soon or late morality pays, and must pay, just because morality involves a right relation to that material universe whose maker and sustainer is God.

But in the world as it is the rewards of morality may seem to the rather materially minded ; to be at times somewhat long in coming. Doubtless to the pure and lofty soul, to whom duty for duty's sake can be both an inspiration and a recompense, virtue can be and often is its own reward ; but less noble souls, or souls which are striving upwards but have still far to go, need, it may be, some more immediate material encouragement to help them forward on their upward path. Such encouragement would be theirs in our imagined

world. Sometimes the reward would be definitely of a very tangible and material kind, but it need not always be conceived thus crudely materialistically, for sometimes it would take the form of increased understanding of the material world or of an enhanced appreciation of its revelation of its creator.

But in the world that we have pictured morality would be exposed to the grave danger that men might pursue it from interested motives, might strive to be good because goodness paid, and to avoid evil because the pursuit of it was fraught with concrete and tangible disaster. Dazzled by the promptitude and certainty with which material blessings befell the righteous, men might strive for righteousness, not for righteousness' sake, but for the sake of the rewards that righteousness would bring. Such men would not become righteous, they would remain as they were, self-seeking and covetous, and the close interrelation of the material and the moral which, for weak and striving souls, would be an encouragement and a help would be for them an occasion of falling because blinding them to the glory of true morality, which seeks not gain but service and expresses itself not in terms of getting but in terms of giving.

Also in our imagined world it is doubtful if there could be any place for the highest forms of morality with which we are now familiar. It is unquestionable that in the world as it is morality does not necessarily bring any material blessing. It is easy to imagine many situations, and such have occurred not infrequently in history, in which morality, so far from bringing any kind of material blessing, even of the most refined kind, would bring material and physical misery, and even suffering and death. In such circumstances the moral man is true to his conscience, because it is his settled conviction that nothing material can justify a man in disloyalty to the best that he knows, and that no bodily blessing can make amends for the wound that man inflicts upon his spirit if he wittingly gives lodgement to a lie in his soul. It is part of the moral strength of the world as it is that it not infrequently provides occasion for morality to flame forth in the glory that is all its own, and to shine out in radiant indifference to all material things. Nor do such occasions

come solely by the machinations of those who are evilly disposed. They may come thus, but also they may come without any human cause as the result of some terrestrial cataclysm, an earthquake or a tidal wave or a volcanic eruption of terrifying severity. Nor indeed need we throw nature into wild disorder to see morality shine forth at its highest and its best. A fire in a tiny tenement in a back street may show us it; or a leaking boat slowly sinking in the still waters of a wide lake. When men lay down their lives for their friends the material setting is not always stirring or spectacular, and there is something seemly and appropriate when on such occasions the material environment offers little to catch the eye or hold the attention, for at such times the spirit of man is in a pre-eminent degree passing judgement upon the material world and ranking it as nothing when it conflicts with morality's supreme demands.

Nor, to turn from life's dramatic endings to the more prosaic living of it day by day, does the world that we have imagined offer scope for that quiet moral heroism which is the glory of many an individual life and home. In a world where material things responded more sympathetically and more promptly to the needs of the righteous than they seem to do in this world in which we live, there would be little or no occasion for that brave adherence to the dictates of morality in the face of adverse material conditions which now so often wins our admiration. In such a world there would be less need and opportunity for morality in its more heroic forms and, to that extent and in that sense, such a world would be spiritually a poorer world than that which now we know.

It is, indeed, an interesting reflection to remind ourselves that a similar result will be achieved when Christianity is more widely and more faithfully practised than at present. It is incontestable that the material resources of the earth are ample for the needs of its inhabitants. Not only can there be produced abundant food and raiment for every one, but the improvement in the means of communication and their increased rapidity make it easy to distribute these things practically everywhere. All that is lacking is goodwill and a readiness for self-sacrifice. If we imagine that in years to

come men's hearts are so filled with the spirit of Christ that they really love their neighbours as themselves, it is clear that none will know material want or be in need, not merely of the necessities of life, but of some at least of its luxuries. In such a Utopia, as in our imagined world, there will be no opportunity for the exercise of certain of the more heroic forms of morality, for none will be exposed to the terrible temptation to secure material profit at the cost of moral loss. No mother will be tempted in her desperate poverty to steal for her children, for no mother will be desperately poor in the sense that she and hers are in acute need of the necessities of life, and no father will be tempted to crime for the sake of those he loves, for others will love them too and minister to their wants. But of this Christian Utopia we cannot say, what we were disposed to say of the world we had imagined, that it would be spiritually a poorer world than that with which we are at present familiar. There would be, it is true, the loss of some of the more heroic forms of morality, but that loss would be more than compensated for by the increase in brotherly love, the growth of neighbourly affection, the spread of the spirit of mutual service between individuals and nations throughout the world. It is probable enough that the exercise of these noble qualities would still call at times for the display of morality in one or other of its more heroic forms but, even if such occasions were not frequent, the world would still be spiritually a richer place. It is good to see men holding fast to righteousness in spite of material need ; it is still better when there is a common recognition that material things are instruments for mutual service, being in themselves of no great account and certainly unworthy of comparison with those treasures of the spirit in which the true riches of humanity consist.

But not only is the Christian Utopia of which we have just been speaking spiritually preferable to the world we imagined, in which there was an obvious interlocking between the material and the moral but also, it will be remembered, we found upon examination that the far from perfect world of our present experience was of more spiritual worth than the world of our imagining. The latter at first seemed attractive but this present world is a world of finer texture,

richer in the opportunities that it affords for noble living and high morality. Therefore it follows that the world of our experience is a greater and more signal proof of the power of its creator than the world of our imagining could ever be. That latter world was cruder, rawer ; it lacked the scope and finish of the world we know with its abundant opportunities for the display of heroic virtue and for the recognition and attainment of the highest values.

To argue thus is not to maintain that the present world is perfect. It is not, nor is any Christian theist concerned to maintain that it is. It needs vast improvement in a variety of ways before it can hope to be well-pleasing unto God. Moreover that improvement, if and when it comes, will, as we saw in our sketch of the Christian Utopia, destroy certain opportunities which we now possess for the acquisition and display of virtue. But, though those opportunities will no longer be available, they will have been replaced by spiritual gains exceeding them in value and for which they paved the way. It is part of the greatness and moral grandeur of the world as we know it now that, with all its faults and imperfections, it not only reveals much that is glorious and noble, but has within it the potentiality of a future yet vastly richer in its spiritual wealth. All to whom moral values make appeal are awed by the power of a creator who could bring such a world into being. They are impressed and humbled by the contemplation of the mind that could plan so intricate a design, and by the thought of the power that was adequate to give it objective reality.

We may say that and yet quite readily admit that there are of course, as we have shown already, certain difficulties and obstacles which in part prevent us from seeing in its fullness the vision of the world as the school of morality. Further, it is no doubt true that differences of temperament and training and experience will cause men to vary markedly, alike in their capacity and in their readiness to see that vision. There may even be those from whom it is entirely hidden. But when due weight has been given to every obstacle and hindrance and when the last qualifying clause has been penned it remains true to say that for many souls the moral power visible in this present world, imperfect

though it be, fills them with awe before the might of its creator and bows them in adoration at his feet.

It is important to be clear about the exact course of our argument. We are not in the least attempting to repeat or restate the moral argument for the existence of God. That argument is of great importance and value but it is not our present concern. We are not trying to establish the existence of God by the moral or any other argument because for us God exists already. We are moving and shall move throughout this study within the limits of Christian theism, and therefore for us the existence of God, as that existence is understood in Christian theology, is axiomatic. Our purpose is to answer this question. Granted the existence of the God of Christian theology, why is he worshipful? In other words, God is, but why do men worship him? Such is our general purpose, and our immediate purpose is to see how far God's creation of a morally constituted world evokes the worship of those who accept his existence.

In attempting to carry out our purpose it will probably be best to proceed from the evidence that is comparatively simple to the evidence that is more complex. We may begin with the not particularly well-educated or instructed believer who thanks God for the love of wife or parents. He knows that this love for which he is grateful is a good thing, quite possibly he regards it as the best thing in his experience, and, because at least in some sense he regards God as the giver of all good gifts, he desires to thank him for the good gift that has been vouchsafed to himself. The very act of thanking God for his gifts is a reminder, if such be needed, of the greatness of the one who thus can give, and this greatness in its turn arouses a feeling of creaturely dependence and perhaps too of moral unworthiness. Thus that which at first had in it perhaps very little of worship in the sense of awe and adoration develops both in the very course of its expression, enabled to do so because awe and adoration, though hardly explicit or self-conscious, were latent in germ in the attitude of the believer from the first.

The worship of the believer whom we have been considering was called forth by that which is recognised by all but the most obtuse as a moral good of the highest worth, the devoted

self-sacrificing love of wife or parents. Our next example may be a little more recondite. A rather conventional and casual Christian is smitten with a long illness which in all human probability will end fatally. Thus sharply brought face to face with life's uncertainty and the problem of its meaning, and aided perhaps by the prayers and counsels of friends and clergy, the sufferer is strengthened and deepened in his faith and surrenders himself utterly into the hands of God. In the spiritual peace and enlightenment that may be expected to result it is probable enough that the sufferer will give thanks to God for his illness because it has brought him face to face with reality and taught him the love of God.

It is important that we should see the implications of this attitude. The sufferer by thanking God for his illness has in reality acknowledged that the world is morally constituted. It is not of course to be supposed that every sufferer who by suffering has been brought nearer to God could either himself deduce the conclusion that his change of mind was evidence of the moral government of the universe, or even see the force of that conclusion when presented to him by another, but none the less the conclusion is in fact true. The patient's attitude shows that, in his opinion and experience at least, sickness, physically an unpleasant and evil thing, can be used for good and that material disasters can be made the occasion of spiritual blessings. To take up this position is to acknowledge that in the world of our experience the moral is more ultimate than the material. Many, like the sufferer of our example, would be moved to take a further step and to bow themselves in worship before that world's creator.

We may take, as our third illustration of the way in which the world as we know it moves men to worship its creator, its effect upon the reflective Christian thinker. This man surveys the world of our experience. Because he is by nature and training accustomed to abstract thought he generalises from particular instances that come beneath his immediate observation, and furthermore he is a student of the reflections of others. He sees the world as a place in which many forms of moral activity take place, all of them pleasing and attractive and some of them of rare and fas-

cinating beauty. He recognises also that there might be a much richer display of moral activity in the world than in fact there is, and that for shortcomings in this respect man himself must be held responsible. Our Christian thinker observes that the world offers unceasing opportunities for moral conduct and for that growth in strength and beauty of character which results from the consistent choice of the good and the steadfast refusal of the bad. As himself an agent and responsible for his life's activities he may at times quail somewhat in spirit beneath the burden of his responsibility but, as a reflective thinker, he cannot but be filled with admiration for the wisdom and the power of the creator who called into being an arena so admirably adapted for the cultivation and display of morality and virtue.

In itself, however, such an act of creation perhaps hardly moves to worship. It is possible to imagine a creator who was himself indifferent to moral issues but who created a world similar to our own and who was content to watch the struggle between good and evil, right and wrong, with a calm tranquillity that took no serious heed of the ultimate result. A thinker would be impressed by the power of such a creator, by the insight and wisdom that enabled him to devise a world so well adapted to the ends he had in view ; but, if this thinker adhered to those moral standards with which Christianity has made us familiar, he would be shocked at the moral obliquity of such a creator and accord him less honour and respect than he would pay to the more moral of his creatures. It is impossible for one who has made his own the Christian standard of morality to regard with equanimity any who are indifferent to it ; morality cuts too deeply into life to be a thing of trivial importance ; it is much or it is nothing ; if it counts at all, it counts greatly. Therefore whilst the Christian thinker might be impressed by the power and understanding of a creator, who fashioned a world such as the one we know to be admirably fitted for the cultivation and exercise of virtue, he would only be moved to worship that creator if he had reason to believe that goodness and righteousness were to him things of paramount importance, and evil and wrong things to be resisted to the uttermost. Man would be impressed and

awed by the power of any being who could create a world at all ; but, if he is himself moral, he can only reverence a creator for whom moral distinctions are of supreme importance and who is wholeheartedly on the side of the good. Man acknowledges the power of a God who creates ; if he has the moral standards of a Christian he only worships a God whose will it is that the world of his creation should be utterly devoid of evil.

In continuance of our enquiry as to the extent to which the divine power is evocative of worship we may consider here certain thoughts on man's creatureliness. These thoughts will lead us on to other aspects of the divine being besides that of power, but they may fittingly be taken here because man's creatureliness is, as the very word shows, primarily the outcome of the divine power in creation. Man is a creature because God is a creator. Man's creatureliness shows itself in a variety of ways ; he possesses only a derivative existence ; he neither came into being of his own will nor does he continue in existence in his own right ; he is sustained and upheld by a power external to himself and independent of him. Creatureliness of this type does not in itself evoke worship in the creature, nor is there any reason why it should. It is easy enough to imagine a malevolent creator who would create beings whom he might trouble and torment. Such creatures would be impressed by the power of the being who made them ; they would probably fear him, and do their utmost to conciliate him and win his favour ; they might even offer him the outward worship of sacrificial act and verbal rite ; but the worship of the heart would be denied him by all who had in any way approximated to the moral standards accepted by Christians. They, though his creatures, would be unable to honour and respect him, and men cannot worship where they cannot honour and respect.

Or again we might imagine a creator who created because he was conscious that he would find something amusing in the struggles and strivings and hurryings to and fro of the creatures he had made. Such an attitude was at times represented as characteristic of the gods of Olympus, and on occasion it finds expression in modern thought and liter-

ature. It occurs for instance in Hardy and, though it is not typical of him, is to be met with in Tennyson. The nearest we ourselves get to actual acquaintance with such an experience is when we disturb an ants' nest and, calmly aloof and mildly amused, watch the feverish activity of the miniature world which we have disturbed. If men knew themselves to be as the ants of our illustration in the estimate of their creator they would not worship him. It is important to see why ; and we shall be helped to do so by considering a speculation somewhat akin to that just discussed, but differing from it in that it is put forward by some who definitely accept the Christian theistic position.

There are a few Christian thinkers who would urge that God has a sense of humour and that to some extent his humour found expression in his creative activity. The hippopotamus has been mentioned as an example of God's humour in creation. To argue about humour is admittedly a precarious and hazardous proceeding, for one man's laughter is another's tears ; but if we are to look for examples of humour in the world of creatures, there are those who would not choose the hippopotamus as the supreme example just because his immense proportions impart to him a certain element of grandeur and impressiveness. The very large, when it is its nature to be very large, is never ridiculous. A mole hill might conceivably be ridiculous, a mountain could never be. Again if a creature departs from the proportions of its nature it may become a humorous spectacle. Thus a very fat hippopotamus might quite properly arouse laughter ; but a hippopotamus as big as, but not bigger than, a hippopotamus should be is saved by the very grandeur of his bulk from appearing as humorous to many people as appear for instance the wart-hog, certain kinds of ant-eater, or various blue-cheeked, or otherwise fantastic, baboons.

No doubt a naturalist, jealous for the dignity of the objects of his studies, might retort that much that appears ridiculous to us is in reality a marvellous adaptation of means to ends, and is of essential service to the animals concerned in their normal ways of living. Possibly also our naturalist might hint that man himself might for various reasons be an object of derision to the beasts, but such arguments or innuendoes

hardly take us to the heart of the matter when we are concerned with the creative activity of God. We shall penetrate more deeply if we consider the problem of the divine humour in relation to the divine character as a whole. Let us assume for the moment that those thinkers are right who see in creation some evidence of humour on the part of the creator ; and, to give a concrete turn to the discussion, let us grant for the sake of argument that the hippopotamus was created because God found it amusing to have such a creature in his universe. Next let us imagine the hippopotamus to be conscious of this fact. As he swims in the warm waters of the tropical rivers, as he eats and drinks, as he seeks a mate, as he lies down to sleep, there is with him the thought that he exists because God finds him amusing. Surely the knowledge would be injurious to his character ; it would depress and sour him, he would become surly and disagreeable, a hippopotamus sad at heart and uncertain of temper because a hippopotamus for whom self-respect was impossible.

Now it is of course fantastic to imagine a hippopotamus possessed of self-consciousness in the way we have described ; but the situation is not fundamentally altered if we eliminate the self-consciousness of the hippopotamus and leave everything else as before. We then have an animal which simply exists because God finds it amusing. The animal itself is unconscious of the fact but man is aware of it and, in proportion as he is consistent in his thinking, regards the hippopotamus as essentially a ridiculous creature because it is so by the ultimate standard, the mind and will of God. In such a situation there is nothing inconsistent *a priori* with the divine power. It is conceivable that God could create in this fashion until we remember that the divine power must be consistent with the divine love. So soon as we remember that, we are obliged to consider whether a loving God would create simply for his own amusement, and the enquiry is one that will require a certain delicacy of analysis if it is to be brought to an adequate conclusion.

We may begin by noting that, if we accept the Christian position that God takes knowledge of the lives of his children, there is nothing inherently impossible in his taking knowledge

of their humour. If we believe that God is aware of our strivings after righteousness, there is nothing illogical in believing that he is aware of our strivings after humour for occasionally the two kinds of striving are closely interrelated. Again if God knows when we sin, it is not irrational to suppose that he knows when we laugh ; after all, the laugh is sometimes the sin. Further, if it be true to say that God rejoices when we are good, and grieves when we fall into sin, it is not obviously absurd to say that God smiles at our humour and is amused at our wit. There are indeed certain qualifications to be made. In the first place God has no doubt his own standard of humour ; not all that appears amusing to us appears amusing to him, and it may be that there are human thoughts and words and deeds which God finds amusing but in which we see nothing to provoke a smile. In humour as in morality or art man has not yet effected a complete approximation to the divine canons.

In the second place, as the scholastic theologians so constantly insisted, there is no doubt a strong anthropomorphic element in our thinking when we picture God as rejoicing or grieving or being amused. To those who have accepted and made their own the traditional view of the infinite, self-existent Trinity, abiding untroubled and unmoved in absolute, eternal bliss, there is something partly humorous and partly almost blasphemous in the enquiry whether God himself has a sense of humour. All that we ourselves are concerned to say at this point of our enquiry is that it is possible to study the nature and being of God at different levels for different purposes. Whilst it may well be the ultimate truth about God that he is self-complete, eternal, infinite, in no sense dependent upon or influenced by created things ; yet also, for the Christian theist, the world was made by God and its human inhabitants are meant to be his servants and can come into relation with him. At this level it is just as pertinent, though doubtless not as important, to enquire whether God is amused by our humour as whether he is pleased by our virtues or grieved by our vices. The fact that all three enquiries might be meaningless alike at some higher or some lower level does not in any way condemn their prosecution at the level appropriate for its conducting.

We have next to note the kind of way in which it seems appropriate to suppose that man might amuse God. We can think without difficulty of God sharing our satisfaction in innocent amusement and blameless diversion ; we can less readily think of him as being amused at our misfortunes or calamities. We can think of God laughing with us, we cannot think of him laughing at us. There is nothing unkind about the laughter of God. There is unkindness sometimes in human laughter, but that is because we do not always love as we should. Where there is perfect love there is no malice or unkindness or hardness of heart. The divine laughter therefore is never injurious to our self-respect, never wounds our proper pride. We desire to stress this point for it is illuminating both in relation to the divine humour and to that human creatureliness in connection with which we found occasion to ask whether God's creative activity showed traces of humour.

The divine laughter is never called forth by anything which is a departure from the true nature of man ; it is more careful to respect man than man is sometimes careful to respect himself. Thus there may be those who laugh at the deformed, but God is not of their number, for deformity is a departure from the true nature of man ; there may be those who laugh at sin, but God never laughs at sin for they who sin are not as they ought to be ; there may be those who laugh at spiritual pride and vanity in the heart of man, but it is not thus with God, for the vain-glorious and the proud have turned away from the path made by God for the feet of men. The sound of the divine laughter is only heard when it can bring honour to men ; when man to himself has been untrue there is no laughter in the dwelling-place of God but only silence or the sound of tears.

Reflections, somewhat similar to those which have guided us in considering the relation of the divine humour to mankind will show, it would seem, what is likely to be the divine attitude in this respect to the brute creation. Here as before we can think of God laughing with the animals he has made, but not laughing at them, rejoicing perhaps with the kitten or puppy at play but finding no amusement in the strange antics of a creature sore beset by foes or in the awkward

movements of an animal crippled or diseased. God respects the natures of the creatures he has made ; those natures represent his will for them ; and it neither amuses nor pleases him when for some cause or other an animal proves unable to reach the perfection of its being. Strange or even ludicrous as this or that creature may seem to human eyes it is hard to think that thus it seems to God. He made it, and in the last analysis does a loving God make anything to be ridiculous ? Is it not indeed to set limits to the fertility of the divine mind and bounds to the divine power to suppose that there are creatures who fulfil their destiny in God's great scheme of things solely because they are absurd ? To answer these questions in the affirmative is not to assert that creatures cannot indirectly and secondarily be a cause of amusement to God ; it is merely to affirm that it is not the primary function of any created living thing to be amusing to its maker. A baby is often amusing but we should condemn any man or woman who desired to become a parent chiefly to be able to laugh at the antics of their offspring ; and a somewhat similar feeling leads us to feel that it would be unworthy of God to give even the lowest of creatures no higher rôle than to be unconsciously amusing.

God then, we hold, has always, even for the humblest of his creatures, some higher end in view than that their ridiculousness should give him pleasure. Still more is this true of man, the highest of the earth's inhabitants. Man may and ought to respect himself because God respects him. Man has not been made by God to be a figure of fun but to possess the honour that is due to one who is a fellow-worker with God. A proper self-respect is an essential element in all true creatureliness. Man's is a derived existence, but the important thing about it is not that it is a derived existence, but that it is an existence derived from God. The same truth holds of course of the lion or the snail or the ant, they also derive their being from God, but, for the Christian theist, there is more of the divine life in man than there is in the beasts or insects ; God has imparted himself more fully, given more of himself, to man than he has to the other living creatures. These lesser creatures have their dignity and worth, but such dignity and worth are definitely sub-

ordinate to man's because God has so ordered his created universe.

Man therefore, though as a creature he stands in anti-thesis to God the creator, has in his creatureliness a certain assurance and poise. Nothing that he has is his own ; his very existence is derived, and his dignity imparted from without ; but, when given, these things are his to hold in stewardship, and the honour of a steward is proportionate to the status of his master. Also a steward has an assured standing. His master may ignore or refuse to receive other masters of equal standing with himself, but he does not normally ignore or refuse to receive his steward ; and though God has no equals whom he may receive or ignore as he will, it means much to man that he is a steward in the divine household and, as such, is alike in his master's counsels and in his master's care. If the master be sufficiently exalted it is a great thing to be a steward ; if God be the creator it is glorious to be the created. Man therefore feels no shame at his creaturely condition ; his creatureliness is his glory because he is the creature of God. The creator who made him is so great and so powerful and so good that those, whom he has made and to whom it is given to have knowledge of their maker, are drawn towards him by bands of love and awe and gratitude. It is possible to imagine a creatureliness which would irk and irritate those whose lot it was to possess it ; there is also a pantheism in which there is no real distinction between creator and created ; but it is part of the wonder of Christianity that such are the power and goodness of its Creator-God that men are content, and not merely content but glad, to be his creatures and, as is fitting in creatures who have knowledge of their maker, to offer him worship and adoration.

(c) THE MYSTERIOUS GOD

Much of man's history upon the earth might be described as his reaction to the call of the mysterious. The mysterious has always fascinated man and he has not been slow to accept the challenge that it presents. It is true of course that man is not alone in feeling the fascination of the mysteri-

ous ; here, as in other directions, he shows his kinship with the brutes. Many animals are excessively curious and can be drawn within gunshot of the hunter or close range of the observer by some trick or artifice, which mystifies and bewilders them and so pricks their curiosity that they are impelled to investigate. But man because of his vastly more powerful intellect and the far wider range of his spirit can feel, and has felt, the lure of the mysterious to an extent quite unknown in the animal kingdom. All man's knowledge, for instance, owes its origin, in part indeed to the practical necessities of existence, but in part also to that restless urge to probe the mysterious which is so characteristic of mankind. The craving shows itself in a variety of ways. The explorer feels it as he hunts for the valley of which rumour tells but which no human eye has seen ; the mountaineer knows it as he toils upward, seeking to set his foot on a summit where man has never trod ; it urges on the scholar striving to solve some problem of language or of history ; and it sends the ordinary man, and exceptional men in their ordinary moods, to the library for a volume of mystery stories or to gaze upon a house in which, so it is affirmed, inexplicable phenomena occur.

Man loves a quest and no man seeks the known. It is the unknown, the mysterious, the incompletely understood that draw man and lead him to spend health and strength in searching. We must not indeed exaggerate. It is true enough that a very considerable proportion of the world's inhabitants contrive to banish in large measure the call of the mysterious from their lives. They become at home in the world ; an environment long known and circumstances again and again repeated make life and its activities seem a prosaic walking on a familiar path ; and, accustomed to their little clearing in the forest, they fail again and again to notice the little by-paths that lead away into the mysterious jungle which on all sides hems them in. There is often excuse, and sometimes justification, for this refusal or failure to mark the mystery of life. There are many for whom the practical problem of finding the wherewithal to live absorbs all energy and strength ; many also to whom others look for sustenance and care and comfort and for whom the thronging

duties of each day leave scanty opportunity for observing mystery. Others there are whose important task it is to pass on to coming generations the knowledge that men have garnered in the past, the earth's stored wisdom that thrusts back a little the close-set limits of the mysterious and unknown. Doubtless also it is true that men vary in their responsiveness to the call of the strange and to the lure of the mysterious. That which to one man is a challenge that cannot be ignored is for another but a whisper faintly heard and soon forgotten.

Moreover as men vary in the promptitude with which they catch the haunting note of mystery, so also do they vary in the capacity with which, if they respond at all, they make answer to the call of the inexplicable and unknown. Ideally no doubt there should be a perfect blending of calm research and rational deduction with originality of mind and venturesomeness of spirit, but such a combination is not easy of attainment and so, when the mysterious presents itself to men, there are some who argue so long about it that it is gone again before they see it ; and others who rush forth to see it but cannot begin to understand it or explain it because they have neither disciplined their spirits nor stored their minds ; and few indeed there are who facing the mysterious can look upon it with spirits taut and ready, with the knowledge of the ages at their call, and in their hearts a readiness to offer a welcome to the new.

But though men vary thus widely in their response to the mysterious it is probably true to say that the man, who either does not hear the call of the mysterious or, hearing it, does not hearken, fails to reach the zenith of his being or to touch the full measure of his humanity. For it is the wonder of man that he is a creature who is half-way towards becoming a god. The beasts of the field see no further than their eyes can scan and feel no more than their bodily senses have power to perceive, but man is a creature possessed of a far-ranging mind and a rich imagination ; and, even if we go so far as to assert that all his knowledge rests upon a basis of sense-perception, yet unquestionably it is enlarged and changed and multiplied a thousandfold by man's capacity to make abstraction from experience and, in the

power of his constructive imagination, to build new worlds with materials gathered from the old.

Also it must be remembered that the mysterious is as wide as life. Reason is only partly able to overcome the mysterious and to change it into the intelligible and readily explicable. Much indeed has been accomplished in this respect and the vast stores of accumulated knowledge that man now possesses are the guarantee that many things that were mysterious to his ancestors will furnish no special problem to his children. Steadily and surely reason seeks to penetrate and overcome the fringe of mystery that surrounds man on every side, but there seems little likelihood of the task being finally accomplished. Indeed it often happens that reason solves one mystery by creating another and always at the last each organised branch of knowledge is left with the inexplicable. No science attempts to explain or justify its fundamental postulates and, though this is not in any way a condemnation of the various branches of science, it is evidence that, as was said long ago, all things end in mystery. Even if philosophy accomplishes her task and gives us a synoptic view of the universe into which all the pre-suppositions and postulates and data of the arts and sciences neatly fit, that universe will probably still appear to us as a given universe, as something which we must just simply accept. Or alternatively it may be that this universe of philosophy will appear rationally self-evident, as something of which the non-existence would be an absurdity not credible to the intellect, yet even so reason itself appears as something given, it just is, and no account can be given why it is. Reason is for man an ultimate, he cannot go beyond reason or seek to explain or justify it, it is one of the limits of his experience and beyond it he cannot pass. Reason itself which grapples so manfully and often so successfully with the mysterious is in the last resort itself a mystery, something which man cannot wholly understand or completely explain but only accept and use.

Moreover reason besides being in the end itself a mystery is not adequate to the whole of life. Life is wider than reason, and living a more comprehensive activity than reasoning. Living includes reasoning but it includes a good deal besides

reasoning. With indefatigable energy reason strives to comprehend life but there remain large areas that are above or beneath the reach of reason. In them there is more than reason can understand. We may take for instance the fact of our physical life. Biology can tell us much of the history of our physical structure and explain by reference to our age-long ancestry why now our physical forms are as they are. Medical science can do much to explain the causes of health and sickness, and the reactions of the body to very varying environments. Yet no one, however thoroughly trained in biology, in medicine, and in kindred studies, would dream of claiming that he completely understood the physical life of man. Nor would he claim that he ever expected either to understand it completely himself or that it would be fully understood in some later age. The very fullness and completeness of his own training would have made him realise the subtlety and complexity of man's physical organism and the manifold diversity of its reactions to environment. He would understand that, though rational enquiry might yet accomplish much and penetrate still further into the mysteries of physical existence, yet in the end there would remain mysteries insoluble by the mind of man, in themselves inexplicable yet to be accepted and used as bases for research and elements in explanation.

The situation is similar at the level of spirit. When man's life is lived at its highest level there is much which reason has not yet explained and which it is probable that it never will explain. The intercourse of the soul with God, the communion of God with man, the relation of the divine spirit to the human spirit, these are things which reason can only partially understand. Reason may be able to show how they can become possible, and to set forth in some measure the conditions most adequate for their full fruition, yet reason is unable completely to analyse the action of spirit upon spirit, for such action is human life at its highest, and even lower forms of life never completely yield themselves to the dissecting power of reason. There is indeed abundant cause why reason should be unable to understand completely the action of the spirit of God upon the spirit of man. If we are to understand a relationship we must have adequate

knowledge of the two parties who stand in that relationship, and in the case before us reason fully understands neither party. The two parties are God and man, and reason has complete comprehension of neither.

We need not develop at the moment the proposition that man's reason is inadequate for the full understanding of God for there will be an opportunity to deal with this point presently, but we may say a word about the impotence of man's reason to comprehend his soul completely. On the face of it it is a most extraordinary thing that a being like man, endowed with the power of introspection and self-analysis, should be unable fully to understand himself. No doubt the bewilderment of this condition affects us in different ways according to our temperament and mental constitution. The man who is mainly interested in things that can be seen and touched and handled is probably much less troubled by his inability to arrive at a complete understanding of himself than is the more reflective and introspective type of man who is more interested in ideas than things. It is noticeable too that man's bewilderment about himself often begins quite early in his life. Many children are puzzled by the question of their own identity and wonder what they really are. With the lapse of years they may attain to a working solution of the problem and the stress of living may drive it largely from their minds but there are probably always some individuals, other than professed philosophers, theologians, psychologists and the like, who remain perplexed at the problems of selfhood and continue to speculate about the nature of identity and the mystery of their own being.

It is, however, not very difficult to understand why man should not be completely comprehensible even to himself. In the first place as the possessor of only derived being man cannot expect to understand himself fully. He is a created being and no creature fully comprehends its creator. In the second place man understands with his reason, but his life, being wider than his reason, has in it a good deal which lies outside the range of reason. It is indeed probably true to urge that anything in his individual being of which man can take cognisance is to some extent amenable to reason and

capable of being given some sort of rational expression. Thus the most fleeting sensation in the body, if I experience it at all, can, however vaguely, be described by me and in a measure related to my general experience of life, and such describing and relating are activities of reason. Similarly with the most evanescent spiritual experience, if I have it at all I can give some account of it, using my reason in the process. Even the very highest experiences of the mystics, their raptures, their sense of most intimate union, are amenable to reason to the extent to which those who have experienced them are able to give a rational and coherent account of them to others.

But the mystics insist, with a unanimity that is impressive, that the very heart and essence of their experiences are incommunicable and inexpressible. Again and again they assert that they are attempting to describe the indescribable, to speak things that no tongue can utter. Also it is tolerably clear, though this is perhaps not always realised by the mystics themselves, that their primary difficulty is not one of language but of thought. It is not so much that they lack the words to express their thoughts as that they lack the thoughts to express their experiences. Clarity of expression always presupposes clarity of thought and clarity of thought normally results in clarity of expression. Such expression need not indeed be masterly in its arrangement of sentences or rich in its vocabulary, but it is clear because behind it there is clearness of thought and a clear mind gives a clear tongue. But the mystics are, as they themselves confess, obscure, and their obscurity proceeds much more from lack of thought than from lack of words. Reason is only partially available as the interpreter of the mystical experience just because that experience is something wider than reason. The mystical experience is not irrational but it has its habitat very largely in regions whither reason cannot go, a fact that is fully recognised by the mystics themselves, and in this matter they are but the most striking illustration of what is normal in all spiritual experience. All spiritual experience is something more than merely rational, it is a contact of life with life and such contacts are not completely describable by reason just because there are in them not irrational but non-rational elements.

It is necessary at this point to guard against a danger. Whilst it is true that the mystical experience contains non-rational elements it is important to notice that their presence does not entitle that experience to be exempt from the judgements of reason. There may be elements in the mystical experience with which reason cannot deal but that experience as a whole, and in particular the fruits of that experience, will fall within the purview of reason. For the Christian theist the universe is a unity and, though he may be content to be unable to explain completely the mystical experience, he will expect to be able to fit it with more or less neatness into a unified view of the cosmos. Neither mysticism nor anything else has any claim to be exempt from the enquiries and judgements of reason, just as reason has no right to attempt to apply her canons in regions where they are not applicable.

Man's spiritual experiences, though they are, as we have seen, only partially explicable in terms of reason, are in fact the basis of his life as a spiritual being. Man the spirit lives by the contact of his spirit with the divine spirit. That contact, alike in its operation and in its results, man does not completely comprehend. But man's fundamental need is not the answer to his questions but the wherewithal to live. Doubtless the second is not obtainable unless the former be granted in some measure, but first and foremost man is a living creature and only secondarily a thinking creature, and he needs life before and after he needs thought. This is true, not merely of his life at its lower levels, it is true also of his life at the high level of spirit. Man has more need of spiritual life than he has of spiritual thinking, though his need of the latter is great and the former is impossible without some measure of the latter. Life at any level is wider than the thinking appropriate to that level, and therefore man's need of life is always greater than his need of thinking, or, to put the same truth a little differently, at every level life can give more to man than thought.

It follows therefore that at no level of his existence can man completely understand, in the sense of being able to expound rationally, all that he experiences. Thought can never catch up with life even in the sense of dealing with all the elements in life with which it is competent to deal ; still

less can thought hope to cover life, for at all levels of life there are regions which fall outside the territory of reason. Man therefore never completely understands his life ; at all levels life is for him in part mysterious. Now man may react to this fact in more than one way. It may irritate and annoy him, or it may make him feel powerless and afraid. It may fill him with a sense of his own littleness and with awe at the wonder of the universe. It may give him hopefulness and a feeling of optimism, a glad expectation that out of the unknown will come blessings pleasing to himself. These feelings are not mutually exclusive ; at different moments of his life an individual might experience them all and, in certain circumstances, pass rapidly from one to another.

But there is one element that is constant in these, emotionally so different, experiences. It is the sense of contact with something or someone not completely understood or comprehended, but other than man and wider than man, something or someone mysterious and strange, uncanny and awesome, something or someone whom or which it is now common to describe as numinous. The great influence that has been exerted by Professor Otto's book, *The Idea of the Holy*, has shown conclusively how greatly it was needed ; but it may be that the time has come when it would be a real help to theology if an author would give us a companion volume in which he would stress the rational character of the mysterious as strongly as Otto insists upon the non-rational features in the numinous. For that which is really heart-shaking and soul-stirring in the mysterious is not so much that it is irrational or non-rational, for then we might perhaps suppose that reason could ignore it or even in due course circumvent it or overcome it ; the mysterious would be a kind of strange rock in the stream of life which we might perhaps go round or, if the full flood of life were strong enough, go over.

The feature in the mysterious that really makes man catch his breath and stirs him to the deeps of his being is that all reason points to the mysterious, leads up to it, terminates in it, finds the end of its own journey there. The mysterious is not a kind of solid block of extraneous matter flung into life from outside and alien to all the rest of life, but

the mysterious is of life's very warp and woof, something to which the rest of life points, something which we meet soon or late in all life's activities. The mysterious is rational not in the sense that reason can explain it, but rational in the sense that reason demands it to give coherence to its own limited and partial account of life. Thus the mysterious gains a quality of life and a security of existence which it would not otherwise possess. It is linked to us by the chains of reason ; the noblest efforts of our minds stand surety for its existence ; it is as real, though much less exactly defined, as the conclusions of mathematics or the results of chemistry. Rationally we are sure of it, and life can but confirm and establish on a wider basis the result of which reason is already confident.

But the mysterious, whose existence reason guarantees and which hems us in and which is of the warp and woof of life, is known to us only on its hither side. Its further side is hidden from us and is neither perceived by the senses nor comprehended by the reason. It is natural to suppose that there is consistency in the mysterious and that that which remains hidden is not contradictory of that which is known. None the less there is indescribable fascination in allowing the mind to dwell upon the unknown part of the mysterious. We have no notion of its range and extent ; it is possible enough that there is much on the further side of the mysterious which, though he were given the uttermost opportunity, man could neither perceive nor understand. Perhaps, too, it is there that we should place various affinities of the mysterious with that which is mysterious in ourselves. Man can and does have conscious relationship with the mysterious, but such relationship in no way precludes a further relationship of which man is not himself conscious. There might, for instance, be such a relationship between the mysterious and man's subliminal consciousness ; nor is it altogether fantastic to find opportunity for such relations in the sphere of the purely physical. After all, the very fact that the mysterious is so largely unknown to us precludes us from defining too narrowly the areas within which it can come into relationship with man. Thus it is possible enough that the very springs of physical life in man depend ultimately

for their living waters upon the hidden deeps of the mysterious.

Again we must remember that the mystery of the mysterious is not, or at least need not be, confined to those regions in which we ourselves perceive it. There is no reason to suppose that man is the ultimate gauge of the mysterious. Constantly in his experience man encounters that which mystifies, and at the point of contact he wonders how far away into the unknown the mysterious extends. But human experience after all is a limited experience, an experience of a particular type. There is no reason to suppose that man, even in his collective capacity, can exhaust the available opportunities of experience. We know that in the comparatively limited area of sense-perception man misses much that is perceived by creatures of less intelligence perhaps, but with senses of wider range. We know also that in the animal kingdom and in the world of birds and insects there are capacities and powers to which there is no parallel in our experience, and which we vaguely suppose to be rendered possible by the possession of a sixth sense or of some strange faculty unknown to man.

Moreover it may be that there exist many beings possessed of a spiritual constitution which varies in greater or less degree from that of man. The mysterious makes its impact upon man at many points and man notes those points, but it is possible enough that the mysterious also makes its impact upon many orders of being in ways which we can neither imagine nor understand. Difference in constitution creates a difference in receptiveness, and there may well be beings who perceive the mysterious where man is quite literally conscious of nothing at all. It is hardly likely that these beings are able to be conscious of the mysterious in all the ways that man can perceive it. Possibly none of the ways by which the mysterious draws near to man is a way by which it draws near to other spiritual beings. Man, after all, is an embodied spirit, and at least in his earthly life the fact governs all his perception of the mysterious. But the beings, whose existence we have pictured, need not possess bodies either similar to, or different from, ours. It is true that the visual imagination cannot picture them without

bodies, but there is no evidence that the limitations of the visual imagination are regulative of the order of reality, and it is still permissible to believe that bodiless spirits exist, though we may find it difficult indeed to give content to their lives. It is at least certain that if there are such spirits their relations with the mysterious are very different from our own.

It is important to keep the possible range of the mysterious far-flung, for few things are more cramping and injurious to the spirit of man than for him to suppose that he has his dwelling in a small and familiar world, in which nothing strange or mysterious is likely to occur and in which the few loose ends that still remain are being rapidly tidied up by science. It is part of the function of the artist, whether his medium be words or paint or marble, to prevent men from settling down in the world, to prick them into a restless questing for the ideal, to touch their minds with the uneasy and yet pleasing thought that things are not quite what they seem, to set their spirits aglow with the fascination of some unusual beauty, or to stir their hearts with the very fascination of mystery itself.

For such firing and quickening of man's spirit are an indispensable prelude to the highest of all his activities, the activity of worship. In worship the sense of the mysterious is an integral element, and on the whole the religions of the world have been fully conscious of the fact. They have understood, for instance, the power of the ancient to evoke in man the sense of awe ; their priests have worn garments hallowed by tradition when performing the solemn duties of their office ; in their rites, archaic words and phrases have had their place ; sometimes an ancient language, no longer living on the lips of men, has been entirely used ; actions and ceremonies have been performed in the fashion traditional from the far-back past, and whenever possible the rites and ceremonies have been performed in an ancient sacred building or at a spot long hallowed by the observances of religion.

There have been, and are, other ways in which the religions of the world have sought to evoke and keep alive in their adherents the sense of the mysterious. They have built vast

sanctuaries and shrines, often dimly lit, that the spirit of man may be reminded of its insignificance, and may feel a sense of awe at the long vista of the mighty columns or at the dark recesses of the inmost shrine. Music, too, has often had its part in stimulating man to worship by reminding him of the mystery that surrounds him as he journeys through the world. Such, of course, is not the only function of music in religion, but it is one function and by no means the least important. Music is peculiarly fitted to rouse man's sense of the mysterious for, though it has its own rules and forms, it is less definite than words, more intangible than things, and its haunting strains can raise man from the contemplation of the sordid and material, and fill him with a sense of wonder and of awe until perhaps he feels that the unknown is reaching out towards him and would fain have contact with himself. Nor have the religions of the world forgotten the power of the sense of smell to reach man's spirit. Fumes and odours, sometimes stupefying and soporific, sometimes fragrant and sweet-smelling, have floated in the temples of many creeds, and their smell has kindled the devotion of the followers of many religions, and their slow wreathing spirals have reminded them once more of the shifting clouds of mystery that float around man's path, veiling his vision and at the same time urging him to see.

Yet, though it is true that, on the whole and in the main, men have not been forgetful of the place of mystery in worship, there have been occasions in the past, and are most assuredly such in our own day, when men have sought to banish the mystery from religion and to make it clean-cut and definite. Philosophy, in ancient Greece, so far as it influenced the popular cults at all, at times exercised an influence of this kind; the Deists of the latter half of the seventeenth century and of the first half of the eighteenth century, with their exaltation of reason, had a similar aim striving to make 'Christianity not Mysterious'; and in the latter part of the Victorian era and still to some extent in our own day, the great discoveries of science have had a like effect. So rapid has been the progress of scientific research, so considerable the power that its discoveries have

given us over our environment, that there have been occasions when men have felt that before long they would master all the secrets of the universe and that mystery would be banished for evermore.

Subtly corrosive, too, in its effect upon man's capacity to perceive the mysterious is the scientific temper when it is allied with a merely utilitarian outlook. The true scientist is probably as quick as most men to be conscious of the mysterious ; it may be that owing to his specialised training he is quicker than the average man to see it in some directions and slower in others, but there is no reason to suppose that the disinterested pursuit of science atrophies the capacity to perceive the mysterious. But science, pursued as a means of turning the material universe to gain, is deadly in its effects upon the spirit. For this science is pragmatic science, the science that works and pays. It has no interest in knowledge as such, its aim is material gain, not intellectual vision. This pseudo-science has no interest in that which cannot be understood and mastered and turned to narrowly useful ends. It shuts its eyes to all that is not likely to bring in an adequate return here and now, and eyes that are kept shut soon become blind. Those who pursue science in this materialistic spirit, and all who are reached directly or indirectly by their influence, soon lose in greater or less degree the capacity to perceive or appreciate the mysterious. If they retain any religious interest at all, even this is largely a utilitarian interest ; in religion, as in science, they require that which provides an adequate material return for expended effort.

It is important to notice how easy it is to reach a materialistic outlook in religion, and how injurious such an outlook is to our consciousness of the mysterious, and in consequence to true religion. Religion, for instance, is a comfort and a strength, and therefore it is a constant temptation to the religious to present it simply as such to the irreligious, who are often conscious enough that they need comforting and strengthening. But the comfort and strength imparted by religion are not given directly, they are the indirect consequence of a right relationship with God. The man who is at one with the Power behind the universe is bound to

be sustained and consoled by the existence of that union ; but he is sustained and consoled, not because he has sought strength and comfort as if these were a kind of material thing that could be handed out in independence of everything else, but because he has sought first fellowship with God, and these lesser things have been added unto him. The religion of many primitive savages could teach a useful lesson to some who expound, and to others who try to practise, religion to-day. For the savage, though by no means always, is often conscious that religion is primarily a matter of giving and not getting, of offering sacrifices to the deity rather than collecting blessings for men. Also, and it is perhaps almost equally important, the savage is conscious of the mystery of religion. No doubt his religion is often crude and immoral, or, more fairly, amoral, but there is in it a real grasp of the mystery and uncertainty and hazardous fascination of the divine.

It may reasonably be urged that these two notes of religion are insufficiently emphasised in our own day, and that this fact is a large part of the explanation why religion in general, and corporate worship in particular, have so slight a hold over multitudes of people. There is prevalent such an inadequate conception of God that people feel no especial call to worship him. God for many is one who will perhaps help in trouble and difficulty, though even this is by no means certain ; he may on occasion send material blessings and possibly punish those who fail to do his will, though this last thought is often now replaced by a vague belief in a divine amiability which will not be hard upon anyone ; but there is little realisation of God as wonderful and mysterious, as the lord of all power and might, as a being in whose presence men's hearts are thrilled with awe, and before whom the knee is bowed and the eyes veiled. The very arrangement of many of our churches and chapels shows how largely we have lost the sense of the mysterious in worship. There is a hard, clear light from end to end ; every corner is filled with chairs or pews or stalls ; there are no wide open spaces to suggest the littleness of man or to quieten his self-assertiveness and conceit ; and at night when the kindly darkness might have its chance, and the

shadowed aisles and the tall columns, losing themselves in the gloom above, might seek to speak to man of the mystery and awe of deity, the resources of science are called in and flood-lighting makes sure that no hallowed obscurity whispers to man of the God whom no eye can see nor finger touch.

It will perhaps be well to insist that we are not arguing for obscurantism in religion. Man is a unity, and a fully developed religion such as Christianity covers the whole of his life or fails. Every power that man possesses has its contribution to make to his religious life, and when those powers are at their highest and their best, then their contribution is at its greatest. We believe, for instance, that religion has nothing to lose and much to gain when man's reason is exercised to the full in such activities as the pursuit of natural science, the study of psychology or history, the researches of the philosophers or the investigations of the comparative theologians. All we are concerned to deprecate is the type of mind or temper which seeks to introduce an unreal simplicity into religion and to banish from it every hint of the mysterious and the unknown. We believe such efforts to be gravely injurious just because, as we think, they are plainly contrary to the verdict of man's reason and man's experience. It is precisely because we desire that the observances of religion should have in them no suggestion of what is false and insincere that we greatly wish that there should be present, alike in private devotion and in public worship, the note of mystery, for that note is true to the whole of man's experience, and is evocative of that awestruck adoration which it is his highest privilege to offer to his God.

(d) THE GOOD GOD

The time has now come to note a further element in that which evokes man's worship. This is the element of goodness. Thus far the elements in the worshipful that have come before us have been elements in themselves devoid of moral quality. We have noticed that it is characteristic of that which calls forth the worship of man that it should

be living, powerful and mysterious. But no one who approximated even slightly towards the observance of Christian moral standards could offer worship to a being who was simply living, powerful and mysterious. Such a being might quite well be either evil or indifferent to morality. In either case it would be impossible for anyone who had attained to a certain level of morality to worship him. In other words, we have here a new note in the worshipful ; the worshipful must be good. It would be an interesting piece of psychological research to try to discover whether men have at any time worshipped that which they themselves believed to be evil. It is, of course, unquestionable that beings have been worshipped in the past whom many now count evil ; it is equally unquestionable that the gods of some religions which exist to-day are accounted evil by the adherents of certain other religions. Moreover, it is true that men, either singly or in small companies, have offered their worship to a being or beings whom their own kith and kin or even all their fellow-countrymen deemed evil. Yet all these considerations hardly throw light upon the point before us, whether a man can worship a deity whom he himself counts evil.

It is to be noted that the question implies a certain moral development in the worshipper. He has reached the stage when he can draw a definite distinction between good and evil, but this ability need not imply any great progress in morality. One reads from time to time of cults in which, so historians or contemporary observers assure us, morality is separate from religion. If confusion is to be avoided, it is necessary to see the exact implications of this phrase. What is meant is that in the cults concerned a great deal of the life of the worshippers has not been brought under the sway of religion. A good many of the things which they do or refrain from doing are not thought to be of any interest to their god or gods. In these matters they may be guided by custom or by various other motives, but they are not influenced by religion. To say this, however, is not really to effect a complete divorce between morality and religion; the separation that is effected is only partial, as we can see if we imagine ourselves asking the adherents of one or other

of these cults whether they think it right to practise their religion. Their answer would undoubtedly be in the affirmative, and would show that in their case, so far from morality being separate from religion, the observance of their religion was one of the dictates of their moral consciousness.

There is another meaning that can be conveyed by the assertion that in this or that particular cult morality is separate from religion. The suggestion may be that the adherents of the religion concerned have not yet reached either the Christian standard of morality or even an approximation thereto. This may be true enough, and it may be important to state the fact ; but its stating must not mislead us into thinking that in this or that particular cult there is no relation whatever between religion and any kind of morality. Such is probably never the case, however inadequate, from the Christian standpoint, the religion may be, and however low and degraded the morality to which it is related. Assuming then that the adherents of even the most primitive and undeveloped cults have a certain rudimentary capacity for the drawing of moral distinctions, and that the drawing of these distinctions bears some relation to their religion, we may return to our enquiry whether any man can worship a god whom he himself counts evil.

It will be helpful at this point to secure a certain precision in the use of the word ' worship '. It cannot be denied that there are those, even amongst professing Christians, for whom worship means little, perhaps nothing, more than petition. It must be recognised, of course, that, for the instructed Christian, petition does not mean the asking God for anything that the worshipper himself desires. God is not regarded as a kind of universal provider who, when suitably asked, supplies his worshippers with anything they desire. Such an interpretation would be the wildest caricature of Christian petitionary prayer. The Christian, who is a Christian in deed as well as in name, is perfectly well aware that his petitions must be in accordance with the spirit of the Master whose name he bears and, in proportion as he loves that Master and seeks to serve him, he does not wish to ask for anything that is contrary to his will. But the

casual and uninstructed Christian, and still more the followers of less-developed religions, are often disposed to fashion their petitions with more regard to their own desires than to the will of the deity or deities whom they petition. Their primary purpose is the gaining of their request, not the showing of honour to the deity whom they profess to worship. It is therefore readily credible that worshippers such as these, for whom petition is nine-tenths or more of worship, would not hesitate to offer their petitions to a god whom they themselves accounted evil, if they had reason to suppose that he might grant them their requests. When men are more interested in the gift than they are in the giver, they are not likely to raise awkward questions about the character of one who grants them their desire.

But the moment worship has in it a spark of genuine adoration, the instant the worshipper bows himself before that which he accounts glorious and divine, it is at once unthinkable that the object of his worship should appear to him as evil. Worship, in the sense of adoration, is the tribute of man's spirit to that which he accounts more worthy than himself, and a man cannot worship in this sense that which he himself condemns as evil. So soon as man can distinguish between right and wrong, between good and evil, and to the extent to which he is capable of drawing that distinction, he draws it in relation to the god or gods he worships. It is not enough that the divine should possess more abounding life and greater power than his worshipper, or outstrip in range of being the comprehension of his servant; the divine must also be better than man if man is to pay him the tribute of worship. It would be easy enough to draw from history illustrations of gods who have been able to keep ahead of the developing moral standards of their worshippers, and who, in consequence, have retained their allegiance; just as it would be easy to point to gods who dropped behind and were forgotten because they could not keep pace with the moral progress of their people; whilst there have been yet other deities who, though unchanging, have for long periods sufficed for worshippers themselves morally unprogressive.

In a religion so fully developed as Christianity there is

not merely the recognition that the worshipful must be better than its worshippers, but the emphatic assertion that absolute or perfect goodness is an integral element in that which is worthy of the worship of man. It is recognised that goodness in God must in some degree be different from goodness in man, and that the divine goodness must so exceed our human goodness as to be qualitatively different from it. Yet, so far as it goes, human goodness, which has its source and inspiration in the goodness of God, is an accurate revealer of that goodness, and points forward towards it. It is because man is as good as he is that he can understand that God is the best ; and in proportion as man becomes better, to that extent he will comprehend more clearly the absolute goodness of the divine. Further, the more completely he comprehends God's absolute goodness, the more utterly will that absolute goodness bow him to his knees. He who looks upon the absolutely good, if there be within him the power in some degree to comprehend it, is filled with the desire to adore, for absolute goodness evokes worship, and they who look upon it are filled with loving awe.

It may be well at this point to remind ourselves of that element in the Christian tradition which has concerned itself to maintain that God is in essence beyond all such human categories as that of goodness. This strand in the tradition had begun to be woven long before the time of Christ, for the Greeks were busy with it, and it passed over into Christianity, largely through the influence of Philo and the Neoplatonists. It has always had its place in Christian thinking, though, as we should expect, that place has been mainly with those theologians and philosophers whose interests have been predominantly metaphysical. Neither popular theology nor popular devotion has known much of the God who is beyond all human categories. For the Christian who is metaphysically minded and who has had the advantage of a sound training in dogmatic theology, such a conception of the divine may be in the highest degree evocative of worship. He is able to realise that there is a sense in which it is strictly true that God is beyond the power of man's thought to think him, and beyond the power of man's speech to

express him. He understands that there is an element of truth in saying that God is beyond goodness or beyond beauty or beyond even being itself, and that from certain points of view to say that God is beyond all categories is the highest effort of human thought and the finest flower of Christian devotion. Those, who by temperament and training are able to see that such a statement is not a blank agnosticism, but the assigning to God of all human excellencies supremely magnified, and then the withdrawing from him of all in those excellencies thus magnified that is inconsistent with the divine perfection, find such a God in the highest degree worshipful, and gladly bow before him in adoration.

But for the non-metaphysically minded and for the metaphysically minded in their non-metaphysical moods, a God beyond all human categories is a God unknown and unworshipped. In normal life the God who evokes man's worship is the God who possesses in supreme degree the qualities and attributes which man holds in highest reverence. One such quality is that which is our immediate concern, the quality of goodness. Man admires and reverences goodness ; wherever it is present he holds it in high esteem. It is true that man's ideas of goodness have fluctuated largely through the ages, and that even now there is no world-wide unanimity as to the exact nature of goodness. There are, for instance, still many who account lying and thieving virtues, and the discreet removal of an enemy by poison or the dagger as a goodly act of which all right-minded men would approve. But though there be little unanimity as to the content of goodness, there is complete unanimity as to its desirability. Men may disagree as to what is good ; but they all agree that goodness, as they understand it, is worthy of respect and admiration. It follows, therefore, that men will admire and reverence supremely that which is supremely good. The perfection of goodness, the absolutely good, gains from men their highest homage if they have reason to believe that such goodness is not simply an ideal or mental concept, but possesses actual existence.

For the Christian it is God's perfect goodness that is one

of the strongest forces in evoking worship. Doubtless there is a sense, and a true sense, in which, as we have seen, God is beyond goodness, but only the metaphysically minded can thus think of him or worship him, and they not always. The metaphysically minded not infrequently, and the rest of men always, if they are Christians, think of God and worship God under other categories indeed, but not least as the supreme moral excellence, as goodness at its highest and its best. There may be qualities of the divine nature not readily comprehensible by normal men, but goodness is not of their number. Goodness is something which can be understood in a measure by all who can be said to possess a truly human nature. The tiny babe in the cradle does not indeed know the meaning of goodness, but the tiny babe has not yet attained to the full measure of his humanity ; and there are in the mental hospitals and asylums of this and other lands individuals who are apparently totally, or almost totally, devoid of all capacity to appreciate goodness or to distinguish it from evil. But we should not normally consider such beings truly human ; it seems to us that they are lacking in an essential element of a truly human nature. Certainly we could confidently affirm that such amoral beings as those of our description would be quite unable truly to appreciate or reverence the Christian God. For in that God goodness is an essential element, and its removal would disintegrate the divine perfection.

The goodness of God can be, and is, understood by all normal men, and is evocative of their worship. But here, as so often elsewhere, it would be a fallacy to suppose that all men are equal. Not only does no man completely comprehend the divine goodness, but men differ much from one another in their capacity to apprehend its varied aspects. It will be fitting to note some of the ways in which the divine goodness makes its appeal to men and, so appealing, evokes their worship. We may confine the scope of our enquiry to Christians, but a good deal of what we have to say would be applicable with the necessary modifications to the followers of other religions.

In the first place, we may note that for the struggling, toiling believer there is great satisfaction in the contempla-

tion of the realised ideal. In large measure, no doubt, this satisfaction is a moral satisfaction, a rejoicing in the existence and triumph of the good. The believer, who is conscious sometimes of his own weakness and infirmity and who feels that in him goodness has none too secure a dwelling-place, is gladdened by the thought that goodness is eternally secure in God. But though this satisfaction is in large measure a moral satisfaction, there is a sense in which it is an æsthetic satisfaction too. Those who contemplate the goodness of God experience a sensation or emotion in some ways comparable to the sensation or emotion experienced by the artist as he beholds a perfect work of art. In the main the artist's satisfaction is born of his artistic knowledge; he knows the difficulties that have been overcome, he can appreciate the magnificent technique, he can see the vision that was meant to be caught and held, but apart from this primarily artistic satisfaction, though based upon it, the artist in the presence of the perfect work of art has a feeling of just-rightness which is not in itself a specifically artistic feeling. It is, though in a more exalted form, the same feeling that a man has when a nail is driven in perfectly straight, or a piece of machinery is running with absolute smoothness, or he himself is accomplishing with effortless precision a task in which long practice has made him perfect. It is the feeling of satisfaction that we have when we contemplate anything in whatever sphere which is just precisely as it should be. If we like to call such a feeling a feeling of æsthetic satisfaction, the expression may be of service, provided we remember that the feeling is in no way confined to art, though probably enough it is in that sphere more explicitly self-conscious.

The believer then, as he contemplates the goodness of God, has a satisfactory feeling of just-rightness. Of course, he should have precisely the same feeling as he contemplates every other attribute and quality in the divine nature, for each and all of these are always and in all ways precisely perfect. But probably no feature or aspect of the divine character comes home to the ordinary believer with such force and reality as the divine goodness. Goodness is something vividly known to him in his own experience; he feels

that he understands goodness and sees deeply into its nature, and therefore the average believer contemplates the divine goodness with an intensity of satisfaction that is not normally his when he surveys the other divine attributes. Familiarity, so the proverb assures us, breeds contempt, but it is not so with goodness. It is just those men and women, who have seen most deeply into the nature of human goodness and who have striven most zealously to acquire it, that are most moved to reverence and worship in the presence of the goodness that is divine.

Important consequences follow from the fact that the goodness of God is actual. All too often for man goodness is that which ought to be, but is not ; the good is an ideal not yet actualised. But in God there are no ideals, in the sense of aims unrealised ; in God the ideal is the actual and the actual is the ideal. The good is that which ought to be, and in God it is. Therefore, when the believer contemplates the goodness of God he is greatly strengthened in his efforts towards moral righteousness. He feels not merely that he is ' on the side of the angels ', but, what is vastly more important, that he is on the side of the sovereign lord of the universe. The things for which he himself is striving in this world of time and space eternally are in the divine world ; and that world is more real than this. Disappointed at times by his own frailty and depressed by his own moral inertia the believer is roused to fresh effort and carried forward with a new encouragement when his spirit takes knowledge of the ever-abiding goodness of God.

Nor is it to be supposed that this strengthening and encouraging of the believer is a purely subjective process. It is indeed true that the very contemplation of the divine goodness warms the heart and fires the soul with a new zeal for righteousness, but such is not the end of the matter nor perhaps even its beginning. For the goodness of God is not something quiescent and still, which makes its appeal simply by an innate quality of being, as the marble statue, itself untroubled and unmoved, enthralls the sculptor. The goodness of God is dynamic and alive ; it is not content to wait for men to notice it, it goes forth to rouse men and to quicken them to their trysting-place with God. Indeed,

were it otherwise it is to be feared that there would be little hope for mankind. If the goodness of the Creator were not an active goodness, his creatures would be doomed. Creatures cannot save themselves, if they are saved at all it is because their maker bestirs himself on their behalf. It is the active goodness of God that makes man's salvation possible ; and if we could conceive of God's goodness as a kind of still and passive goodness, we might well despair of any hope for man.

In point of fact, we cannot conceive of God's goodness as merely passive for two reasons. In the first place, God is a living God, a God of energy and initiative and accomplishment. Creation itself becomes incredible unless there is an active element in the divine goodness. A God who was merely passively good would never create ; but a God, whose goodness is such that it leads him to the work of creation, is a God who in his goodness concerns himself with that to which he has given being. A God whose goodness creates is a God whose goodness goes forth to the created. In the second place we cannot conceive of God's goodness as merely passive, because God's goodness is perfect goodness. It is unthinkable that perfect goodness should be simply passive, for goodness is not only freedom from evil or avoidance of evil, it is the will to overcome evil, it is hostility to evil, it is implacable opposition to evil, it is the spirit to seek out evil and to destroy it in all its manifestations. Anything less than that may in a measure be goodness, but it is not perfect goodness. Also it is to be noted that, though the lesser goodness may win man's admiration and respect, and in some degree his homage and allegiance, it is only the perfect goodness, which goes forth flamingly alive to destroy evil and make all things good, that commands man's adoration and gladly-given worship.

In this connection, however, an interesting point arises. We have argued that the goodness of God is an active goodness, partly because it is the goodness of a living God and partly because it is perfect goodness. Assuming this position to be established, we have now to enquire as to the success of this active goodness, and to note how far its success or its failure to succeed are evocative of man's

worship. If, as we hold, the divine goodness is active, it either succeeds or fails in achieving the objects of its activity or it partially succeeds and partially fails. For the Christian believer there is no question that the life of here and now is an arena wherein God's goodness is seeking to accomplish results. There may be other arenas, besides this world of time and space, in which the good God is fulfilling his will, but for the moment we may be content to ignore them, partly because we know so little about them, nor even if they exist at all, and partly because our own world, with which we are abundantly familiar, provides us with plenty of data.

This world in which we have our being may be viewed from a variety of angles, but for the Christian believer at least there can be no question that it is a scene of moral struggle. It is of the very heart of the Christian gospel that in that struggle God bears his part. However we interpret the life and death of Christ, if we are Christians at all, we see in him a moral example ; however we understand the working of the Holy Spirit, if we believe in him at all, we believe that he helps us towards righteousness and holds us back from evil. It is not possible to maintain that God is not actively concerned in the triumph of righteousness and in the elimination of evil without so utterly distorting the Christian gospel as completely to change its character. But, if God be intimately concerned in the moral struggle, it is clear that the final issue of that struggle is of great importance not only in itself but as shedding much light upon the divine nature in general and the divine goodness in particular. For the Christian believer the ultimate triumph of goodness is not in question. It is not in question because it has never been brought into the arena of conflict. It has not been brought into that arena because its very nature is such that it cannot appear there. The ultimate goodness is the eternal goodness of the eternal God, the goodness which is rooted and grounded in the nature of the self-existent Trinity. This is a goodness which cannot be assailed by evil and which is not established or built up by conflict with it.

Our human goodness is so largely the outcome of our struggle with evil and is so constantly viewed in relation to

our moral progress that we are apt to forget that the existence of evil is no necessary presupposition of the existence of good. The good can exist without the co-existence of the bad, and the ideal good, which is also in God the actual good, does so exist. Probably we shall get as near as we are likely to get to understanding the goodness which exists in God without the co-existence of evil if we think of that rather small company of people of whom we say that they are naturally good. Here and there such an individual is to be met with ; we do not suppose that he and those like him are completely perfect, but on the whole and in the main they are indifferent to evil, it does not appeal to them or attract them, for them it largely does not exist ; their goodness is a spontaneous and self-sufficient growth which owes very little of its development to reaction from, or struggle against, evil. With the necessary modifications we shall not greatly err if we picture the divine goodness as of this character. It is an element of the divine nature, it is perfectly natural to God to be good with a goodness which surpasses our imagining, with a goodness which has not developed or grown but which eternally is, which owes nothing to evil, and is entirely out of relation to the bad.

It is important to stress the point that the divine goodness has no relation to evil for it is easy to err here. Human goodness has many relations to evil and the fact is apt to confuse our thinking about the goodness of God. We are beings able to sin and when we do not sin we are good. Moreover because the struggle with sin is for our weak human nature an exacting and exhausting struggle we are tempted to believe that the heart of goodness consists in the abstinence from sin. Yet such an assertion would be no truer than to say that beauty consists in the avoidance of ugliness. Beauty is something positive, something that exists in its own right ; the essence of beauty is not to be found in the avoidance of this or the eschewing of that ; and the beautiful could still exist to haunt the souls of men if the ugly had both never been and was for ever impossible. Similarly, for the Christian, the eternal goodness of God exists in its own right and owes nothing to any possibility or actuality of evil. At times we are tempted by the moral

imperfection of our lives to suppose that good and evil are relative terms, each possessing an equal amount of reality ; it is only when we turn our eyes to the eternal absolute reality, that we are reminded that goodness alone abides there and that in that kingdom the dwelling-place of evil is nowhere to be found.

Yet though evil has no dwelling-place in the absolute being of God, unquestionably it does not lack an abode in this world of time and space. Nor can it be airily dismissed as a denizen of no importance by encouraging reminders that after all it is not to be found in the absolute being of God. Such a reminder may be metaphysically satisfying, it is assuredly morally disastrous. If evil is to be dismissed from the world in which it has so strongly entrenched itself, the only satisfactory way of dismissing it is by meeting it on its own ground and overcoming it with good. It is a large part of the moral strength of Christianity that it seeks to do this. Christianity never makes the mistake of supposing that evil is as important or as real as God ; but Christianity never forgets that evil is a powerful force to be reckoned with, and that it has a horrible reality of its own. It is the message of the Christian gospel that man must overcome evil with good ; but that in itself might be a counsel of despair, true enough in theory but incapable of realisation in practice. That which makes the Christian message good tidings of great joy is that it shows us how to attain the goodness whereby alone the evil in the world can be overcome. That goodness must come, and can only come, from the one pure, undiluted well of goodness that we know, the goodness of God. That goodness being infinite can never be exhausted or even lessened for, as the East puts it, ' Take fullness from the full and it remains full '. It is the main purpose of the whole Christian scheme of salvation to enable us to draw freely from this well of living water.

It is true then, that in his efforts to live the moral life, the goodness of God is on man's side strengthening his weakness, enlarging his vision, encouraging him to a brave and steadfast treading of the upward path. We might, therefore, most reasonably suppose that the issue of man's moral struggle could not long remain in doubt, and that

goodness would very soon emerge triumphant and evil be driven headlong from the field. It is certain that such would be our prompt conclusion did not certain grave facts bid us pause. These facts fall into two categories for they consist partly of observations and partly of deductions. The observed facts relate to the present and the past, and the deductions mainly to the future.

That man both can and does resist God is plain to anyone who takes the trouble to look either into his own heart or at the conduct of his fellows. The point is hardly one that needs labouring, it is the age-long commonplace of preachers and moralists. Quite possibly the world has sometimes not been quite so evil as they have suggested, but even a substantial diminution of its guilt leaves us with a solid residuum of sin which can neither be justified nor explained away. Past history and present experience are alike witness that man can and does disregard the divine will. Nor is the significance of this fact really overcome by noting the distinction, drawn by Aquinas and others, between God's antecedent volition and his consequent volition. The distinction, with the careful safeguards added by Aquinas, is one that is well worth making and which can be of service in a variety of ways, but it does not really explain the existence in the created world of much that, for the moralist at least, is clearly contrary to the will of a good God. It is possible to see that there is a sense in which the sinful manifest God's will; they reveal for instance the reaction of the divine goodness against evil and the punishment inflicted by the divine justice; but no subtlety of argument or ingenuity of exposition can, to put it simply, make a believer in a good and loving God convinced that to serve as such a revelation is God's real will for any of his children. We may, if we like, say that so to serve is in accordance with his consequent volition, the phrase has a sound and useful meaning; but neither it nor any other phrase can hide the fact that the things which are merely in accordance with God's consequent volition and contrary to his antecedent volition are the things which God has never really wanted or desired.

The truth is that, though it is a fact of simple observation that God's will is often ignored and defied, it is extremely

difficult and probably impossible to explain why it is ignored and defied, at least by the Christian. On the Christian view of the universe the believer's peace consists in carrying out the divine will. God is the maker and controller of all created things, no one can defy him with any hope of ultimate success. Yet men do, of course, often disregard the known will of God, and it is questionable whether we really explain their conduct by enumerating such causes as the urge of passion, selfishness, fear, envy, and the many other factors that contribute in greater or less degree to man's wrongdoing. For after all the real problem surely is to understand why selfishness, or fear, or passion, or envy, or any other evil emotion of man's heart should be strong enough to overwhelm that which we all know in our calm, impartial moments utterly to outweigh them severally or conjointly, the perfect will of an infinite God.

Not merely is this a problem to which man has not yet found the answer, it is a problem, it may be urged, without an answer, or, in other words, a problem of which not even God himself knows the answer. It may be well, without allowing ourselves to lose the main thread of our argument, to develop this point a little. Sin has other aspects, but at least one aspect of sin is its fundamental absurdity. More grievous charges can no doubt be brought against the sinner, charges for instance of wounding and grieving infinite love, but amongst the other charges this charge can always stand against the sinner that he is an ass. He is an ass because deliberately and with his eyes open he is led by lesser ends to disregard his truest interests, and thus to behave is to proclaim oneself a fool. Sin then is fundamentally irrational and the irrational is in the last resort inexplicable. Not even God himself can find reasons for the unreasonable or understand the unintelligible. Nor, as we hope to show in a moment, is it desirable that he should.

To take up this position is not, however, to leave God entirely helpless in the presence of sin. Sin may be a kind of loathsome alien entity which not even God himself can explain, but in the presence of loathsome alien entities there are more important things than explanation. The really important thing is to know how to deal with the intruder and

to be able to take steps for his eviction. The Christian has no doubt that God is adequate in this regard, and that if sin remains it will be through the failure of man and not through the impotence of God. These considerations shed a good deal of light upon the worshipful quality of the divine nature, for a God who was accounted helpless in the presence of evil could not long receive the worship of moral men. Even a God who was neutral in the presence of evil, who, as it were, kept the ring whilst man fought to overcome sin and evil, would not evoke our worship. God must react with a righteous fervour in the presence of the bad before he can be worshipped by those who would fain themselves be righteous.

Yet men would not withhold their worship from a God who did not completely understand evil. We do not seek a God who can completely explain evil, our desperate need is a God who will enable us to cast evil out of life. Life after all is wider than thought, the need to live is more insistent than the need to think, and if they could conquer evil, most men would be content to remain unable to explain it. We might indeed contend that a God who completely comprehended evil would not evoke the worship of righteous men. For it seems at least possible that for the complete comprehension of evil there is necessary at least a measure of evil in him who comprehends it. Comprehension implies a certain measure of affinity, and a God who completely comprehended evil would be open to the suspicion that the evil which he understood so readily had something of a place in his own divine nature. Such an accusation would not be unworthy of a hearing, but the present writer is not himself concerned to urge it. He would prefer to insist that evil is in the last resort unintelligible to God, and that God the more readily evokes our worship because in his perfect goodness he finds the bad unintelligible. If this analysis be correct then to ask for an explanation of evil is one of those questions that ought never to be put because they are meaningless. There is no ultimate explanation of evil because in the last resort evil is irrational and the irrational cannot be explained.

But if we maintain, as we do, that God evokes our worship not because he understands evil, for we hold that he does not, but because he understands how to deal with evil, we

must be prepared to meet the criticism that ability to deal with a thing postulates a certain knowledge of it. After all, no one, whether God or man, can deal with that of which he is absolutely ignorant. We should meet the suggested criticism by pointing out first of all that evil, like pleasure or pain, is an abstraction. There is no such thing as evil which is simply evil existing by itself. The evil in the world is an attitude of will primarily, and secondarily the outward expression of that will in word and deed. When we bear in mind that all evil which really exists, exists in concrete situations, we can understand that God in his wisdom may know how to deal with every concrete situation that exists now or may exist hereafter, and yet not possess a complete intellectual understanding of evil. To deal perfectly with any situation it is necessary, amongst other qualifications, to possess a complete understanding of the situation before one, so far as that situation admits of a complete understanding. There may, however, be elements in the situation which cannot be understood because they are irrational, and it would be absurd to suppose that a situation involving such irrational elements cannot be dealt with perfectly until the impossible has been accomplished and the unreasonable reasonably explained.

An illustration from a different sphere may serve to make the argument more vivid. We have been concerned with sin and evil, denizens both in the moral sphere; our present concern shall be with the non-moral pathological. There are many sufferers afflicted with the grievous mental defect of permanent idiocy. These unhappy beings live lives that are quite incomprehensible by the sane from within. We can observe their actions and behaviour but we are quite unable to enter into their minds. It is obvious that mental processes have a part in their existence, but it is impossible for us to know those mental processes from inside because, so far as our observations go, they are quite irrational. Further, not merely is it impossible for us to understand these processes but it is presumably impossible for God himself. If the processes are irrational they pass outside the sphere of the intelligible altogether and defy comprehension by any rational being. Yet man is not helpless in the presence of the

concrete situation caused by the existence of sufferers afflicted with permanent idiocy. He recognises the situation and deals with it with tolerable success. Similarly also, we may reverently conjecture, God can deal perfectly with the situation though so far as the content of the minds of the sufferers is concerned he can only know it as a datum and not understand it as part of a coherent scheme. How God deals with the situation, we of course do not know, nor in what ways he comes into relation with those who so sorely need his help ; but we are at least confident that any limitation of understanding imposed upon God by the nature of the case is not sufficient to prevent the perfectly wise outpouring of his goodness.

We must notice, however, that in one important respect our illustration does not illustrate. There is a far-reaching difference between the mental processes of the permanent idiot and the sinner. Though it is perhaps hardly possible to speak with certainty, we normally suppose that the mental processes of the former are determined in the sense that he, whose mental processes they are, cannot control their content or direction. We have, no doubt, still much to learn about the psychology of the insane, but at least it is not customary to regard them as free agents responsible for their thoughts and words and deeds. No doubt in the case of those who are only partially insane there is a certain capacity for responsibility and rational action, and within the limits of that capacity we should hold these sufferers responsible for their behaviour. But these border-line cases do not really affect the general principle that the insane are not accountable for their conduct. With the sinner the situation is fundamentally different. It is the very fact that he is responsible for his conduct and has exercised his responsibility wrongly that makes him a sinner. By acts of deliberate choice he has put the good from him and chosen the evil. There is therefore an inwardness in the conduct of the sinner which is either absent altogether, or not nearly so fully present, in the conduct of the idiot. The problem in the case of the idiot is to explain why one, apparently created in the image of man, does not possess that free-will which is the normal inheritance of humanity ; the problem in the case of

the sinner is to explain why a free man deliberately misuses his free-will in defiance of his own truest interests. The second problem is proportionately more difficult than the first to the extent that it concerns the very soul of man as distinct from his physical and psychological constitution. There is more sheer irrationality, in the sense of conscious disregard of the dictates of reason, in the conduct of the sinner than there is in the conduct of the idiot, and in that sense and to that extent the sinner is more incomprehensible to God than the idiot.

Passing now from these observations of facts that both actually exist in the present and have existed for centuries in the past, we continue our exposition by turning our attention to the deductions which concern the future. It will be remembered that these deductions were to constitute the second group of facts debarring the prompt conclusion that the active goodness of God would speedily banish sin and evil from the world. In the first place the fact that man has so often ignored God's will in the past and so often ignores it in the present at least suggests that he will often ignore it in the future. Many good reasons could be brought forward to show that it would be foolish and wrong of man to ignore God's will in the future ; but precisely the same reasons could be, and have been, brought forward in the past and the present to keep man from turning aside from the paths of righteousness. None the less he has of his own free-will not infrequently thus turned aside. There is no evidence to suggest that the reasons which have failed in the past will prove more cogent in the future, or that man is losing his capacity for sinful unreasonableness. It is possible enough that the world is a better place than it was ; it is probably unduly pessimistic to deny the existence of real moral progress, but only the blindest optimism could maintain that that progress is proceeding at a rate which will secure the complete extinction of sin in the near future.

A second deduction which makes us hesitate to prophesy the prompt triumph of good is connected with man's immortality. Without supposing that any human being either has been, or is, such a monster of villainy as to have set his heart wholly upon evil, we cannot deny that many human

beings have lived and died with their hearts, to a considerable measure, set upon evil. Now for the Christian, men are immortal souls, they do not end at death but pass on to live lives differing somewhat in quality from life on earth. Unless we are to suppose that death is the extinction of our self-consciousness, a supposition contrary to the Christian tradition, it must be supposed that after death we are identifiably the same persons as before. Now, unless we are to imagine God dealing with our personalities in disregard of the moral freedom he has hitherto accorded us, we shall, after death, still retain those elements of evil that disfigure us now and we shall also possess that free-will that at present enables us both to serve God and to scorn him.

It may be true, as some would hold, that the Christian eschatology is riddled through and through with contradictions, it may even be true that it always will be. It is at least arguable that, if the mode of our existence after death is to be markedly different from our present mode, we are bound at times to talk nonsense when we attempt to discuss it, much as a fish dwelling only in the water might be expected to be guilty of futility in describing the life of a bird in the air. We must expect to err at times when we discuss things of which we have no experiential knowledge. If, however, we bear this danger in mind, we may legitimately consider some of the eschatological conclusions that are open to the acceptance of the Christian theist. The most relevant for our present purpose is to note the extraordinary difficulty of banishing evil from the universe. If man were not immortal the task would be in one sense easy. We might suppose that during a vast period of moral striving mankind would struggle upwards until at length they were surely and securely established in goodness with very little danger of relapse. We may ignore the fact that past history gives comparatively little justification for any belief in man's continuous upward progress ; there is always the possibility, and often the actuality, of a retrograde moral movement both in the individual and in the race. Still it is imaginable that, inasmuch as goodness is in accordance with the will of the Creator of the universe, it will gradually gain strength and in the end, after various relapses and collapses, prove

finally triumphant over evil. There is nothing illogical or irrational in picturing righteousness at last supreme in the world, and if man were not immortal, the only moral problem then left would be the fact that for long ages men with much evil in their hearts had dwelt upon the earth.

Man, however, for many other believers and not least for the Christian theist, is immortal ; and if there be evil in his heart here he carries it forward to whatever life awaits him beyond the grave. The existence of this evil is a serious problem. Protestant thought may imagine much of it blotted out by a kind of miracle at death ; Catholic thought may suppose that a good deal of it is purged away by a process which, once commenced, is neither voluntary nor fallible ; but it is questionable if these expedients can really commend themselves to serious thinkers whether Protestant or Catholic. Certainly neither method is a moral method ; both ignore entirely man's nature as a free agent ; and the Christian moralist at least will be extremely reluctant to admit that moral evil can be overcome by any but moral means. Nor will he ever consent to adopt the way of escape popular in some other religions and suggest that evil is in some sense a delusion due to human limitations, and that at death we attain to a greater enlightenment and see that evil has its place in the whole scheme of things.

The Christian moralist is right in resisting to the uttermost any such interpretation of evil for, if accepted, it would inevitably shatter all that he holds most dear. If after death we are to discover that evil fits quite happily into the divine scheme, and that all our distress and pain about it here on earth were in reality due to inadequate knowledge and the inevitable blindness of earthly living, then the heart goes out of the moral struggle and none strives for righteousness for that which ought to be already is, though man in his finitude may sometimes fail to realise its presence. But for the Christian moralist, not only is such an interpretation of life on earth intolerable, it is also incredible that the demands of morality should be ignored in any world that is to come. It is the determination of the Christian moralist not to admit evil to heaven that keeps open the gates of hell. Jealous of man's free-will he maintains that there is always the possibil-

ity both here and hereafter of the stubborn soul steadfastly refusing to do the divine will ; and jealous also of the moral worth of righteousness he cannot believe that such stubborn souls could come into the nearer presence of their Lord ; they must go to their own place. Traditional Christianity certainly agrees with him ; popular thinking, both Catholic and Protestant, hopes that he is wrong and, partly in consequence of the hope, is inclined to think he is ; more serious thinkers on either side at least insist that the possibility that he is right must be kept open.

But once we admit the possibility of the existence of hell as the place or, better, the state of the finally impenitent, grave doubts at once arise as to the ultimate triumph of the divine goodness. That goodness is active, but with the finally impenitent, if such there be, it has finally failed. It is indeed possible to point out that there is a sense in which the finally impenitent are evidence for the divine goodness. Being as they are, the treatment they receive from God is the best that circumstances permit. The divine attitude towards the finally impenitent is fully in accord with the perfection of the divine goodness. All that perfect goodness can do or be for souls so far gone from righteousness, God does and is. Yet even so it cannot be denied that such arguments are in a sense special pleading ; they are the reappearance in the realm of eternity of that distinction between the antecedent and the consequent volition of God, which we examined in connection with sin in this world of time and space. When the last word has been said about sinners either here or in eternity demonstrating by their condition the goodness and justice of God, no Christian, whether ordinary believer or professional theologian, really supposes that any such demonstration can be, or is, as well-pleasing to God as would be the loving obedience and loyal service of *all* his children.

We have now completed our enquiry into the probable success of the active goodness of God ; it remains for us to consider how far the success or failure of that active goodness is evocative of man's worship. Man can only worship that which he conceives to be good. When man has so far developed in civilisation and culture that he has reached the idea of perfect goodness, he can only give his whole-hearted

allegiance to a being who is perfectly good. Until he reaches this stage of development man can worship that which is better than anything he knows ; but, once man has the idea of perfect goodness, a god who is only very good, merely better than anyone or anything else, ceases to enthrall. To say this, of course, is not to deny that man's idea of perfect goodness is not static, or incapable of improvement. As regards its content that idea is undoubtedly fluctuating ; it is only the abstract form of perfect goodness that is static. Civilised and cultivated men worship only a perfectly good God, but the exact nature of the divine goodness may be very varyingly conceived at different times and in different places.

The Christian theist is not in any way concerned to deny the progressive quality of man's perception of the divine goodness. It is part of the Christian tradition to hold that we have not yet attained to all the truth that is available even here on earth, whilst beyond the grave there are far greater wonders still to be revealed to those who in this life have sought to be true to the light as they have seen it. Nor is the bearing of the truth, yet to be attained on earth, upon the nature of the divine goodness to be too narrowly conceived. The Christian does not, indeed, suppose that any fresh truth discovered upon the earth, whether in the sphere of science, or morals, or art, is ever likely either to change our conception of the divine goodness fundamentally, or to illuminate it with a light in any degree comparable to the revelation of God's perfect goodness vouchsafed to us by the fact of the Incarnation. None the less the Christian holds, in accordance both with his sacred scriptures and with the pronouncements of reason, that there is still much truth awaiting discovery and that all of it will shed light, directly or indirectly, upon the nature of the divine goodness.

The thought that there is still much to be discovered which will shed light upon the divine being, and the recognition that in the past there has been much divergence in men's interpretation of the divine perfection, might easily prove paralysing to worship. The spirit of man, conscious that it had so often given its allegiance to false or, at best, imperfect gods, might sink oppressed beneath the thought that

so to err was its inevitable fate and, a prey to scepticism and uncertainty, withhold its worship from any God, fearful of worshipping unworthily. That this is no imaginary danger is shown, for instance, by the fate of certain somewhat unstable and ill-instructed souls who, after flitting from religion to religion, or at least from sect to sect, become confused by the many diversities of belief and practice of which they have had experience, and at the last sink in belief to a mild agnosticism and in morals to an indifference which is not far removed from laxity.

The danger we have outlined is not, however, a really serious danger for the instructed Christian, because he is guarded against it by the central fact of the Christian faith. The central fact of the Christian faith is that 'God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son to the end that all that believe in him should not perish but have everlasting life.' Just because for the Christian it is a fact of history that the pre-existent Son of God came down from heaven and was made man, there is a certain quality of finality about the Christian faith that, for those who accept it, makes it unthinkable that the content of that faith should ever be seriously modified or changed. The rock-like fact of the Incarnation has fixed for all time the ground plan of the Christian faith. Future discoveries and increased knowledge may make possible additions to, or modifications of, the superstructure, but the main fabric of the Christian faith is founded and built for ever. With the Father's Agent in the work of creation become, as touching his human nature, a created being, with the Lord of history organic to history, the Christian needs no further assurance of the stability of his faith, but can rest content that in all that is essential and fundamental his religion is truly and really final.

Such a religion is evocative of worship in a supreme degree, and it will be interesting to apply this thought of the finality of Christianity in the sphere which is at present our immediate concern, the active goodness of God and the power of that goodness to evoke the worship of man. It is beyond our power really to imagine any proof of the divine goodness that would surpass, either in the display of love or in cogency of demonstration, the fact of the Incarnation. We may at

first feel tempted to deny this and to urge that, great and wonderful as the goodness of God is as displayed in the historic fact of the Incarnation, it is possible to suggest, theoretically, ways in which the divine love might have been still more conclusively evinced. Thus it might be contended, by one who had not grasped either the general implications of Christianity or the fundamental tenets of theism, that the Incarnation would be a greater proof of the divine love if not merely the second person of the Trinity but all three Persons of the Godhead had become incarnate. Such a complete and absolute incarnation would, it might be urged, show a deeper measure of goodness and a more profound self-sacrifice on the part of God than are evinced when only the divine Logos becomes incarnate.

Such an argument is feasible and attractive so long as we view it from one particular angle and consider only the self-limiting and self-emptying that are in some degree involved when the divine becomes human. The argument, however, appeals much less strongly when we view it from another angle and observe that it involves the very fount and source of deity being brought within the limits of our humanity. So to circumscribe the eternal Father does certainly suggest, if not the annihilation, at the very least the stultification of the Godhead. Yet we ought in fairness to add that this criticism can to a certain extent be met, and met moreover with a weapon drawn from the armoury of traditional orthodox theology. It is one of the central tenets of that theology that the Incarnation, as a concrete fact in the history of this world of time and space, in no way changed or disturbed or broke up the perfect unity of the divine Trinity. It may perhaps be admitted that, whilst apparently conclusive arguments commend this position to our reason, and our faith by no means finds it impossible of acceptation, yet no man is able to imagine ways or modes which would render intelligible this dual functioning of the Logos as at once eternally abiding in the Trinity and temporally abiding incarnate upon the earth. We may say of the traditional position in this matter that we can see that it must be true, but that we cannot see how it is true. We know the fact but are ignorant of the mode of its two-fold fulfilment. Similarly

it might be urged, by the supporters of the theoretical contention outlined above, that it was possible for the three Persons of the Godhead to become incarnate without the destruction of either the unity or the absolute being of Deity. No doubt it would be quite beyond our power to imagine in detail how such a three-fold incarnation could be effected, but the limits of human imagining are not regulative of the divine activity; and a three-fold incarnation, so it might be insisted, does not, in principle, raise any difficulty which is not also presented by the orthodox belief in the Incarnation of one Person only, the eternal Logos.

The theoretical contention that we have outlined would probably be opposed on two grounds by an upholder of the traditional orthodoxy. He would in the first place, whilst admitting the parallel between a single and a three-fold incarnation, insist that a three-fold incarnation of the kind described could not but be seriously derogatory to the dignity and majesty of God and in a measure destructive of the divine being. This is a point of considerable importance which we hope to develop further very shortly. Secondly, and on this argument the adherent of the traditional theology would probably lay the greater stress, Christianity is a given religion. It is a religion based on the action of God in history. God has revealed himself in and through the historical process, and men have known him through experiences in time and space. The right way, therefore, to approach the being of God is not to fashion *a priori* conceptions of God and then to demand that God's revelation of himself in history shall correspond to these conceptions; but on the contrary to go to history, the record of the created universe, in order to learn from it the nature of the God whose universe it is. When we do thus go to the universe we find as its dominant fact a person, Jesus Christ. Orthodox theology asserts, on the evidence alike of past historical fact and present spiritual experience, that this Jesus was in fact both God and man, being the pre-existent Logos living the life of man. If the conclusions of the traditional theology are correctly drawn from facts accurately stated, then Christianity is in a position to test all ideal pictures of the divine by an authentic portrait of God as he is. It may often be in-

teresting to consider what God ought to be ; but to know him as he is, is man's primary and fundamental need.

Accepting then the Incarnation as traditionally understood as a fact of history, we may bring that fact into relationship with the theoretical argument that we suggested might be urged against any idea of a three-fold incarnation. The view was put forward that such an incarnation would be seriously derogatory to the dignity and majesty of God and in a measure destructive of the divine being. We are now at liberty to examine this point further. As a fact of history, there was not a three-fold incarnation, there was the Incarnation of one Person. It is indeed important to remember that the three Persons of the Trinity are one in will, and that the perfect harmony of the Godhead is never broken. It is perfectly true to say that the Incarnation of the Logos was not merely willed by him but also by the other two Persons of the Trinity, and in this carefully-defined sense we may, if we wish, speak of a three-fold Incarnation. None the less to do so would probably be dangerous and misleading, unless we were constantly at pains to point out that the Incarnation of the second Person of the Trinity differed in certain essential respects from the Incarnations of the other two Persons.

Now since for the Christian theist it is an admitted fact of history that only one Person became incarnate, we may legitimately seek to draw from this fact such conclusions as are specially relevant at this stage of our enquiry. We note then first of all that, since only the Logos became incarnate, a three-fold incarnation was not required by the perfect goodness of God. It was consistent with absolute goodness that only the second Person of the Trinity should become incarnate for man's salvation. In our gratitude for God's unspeakable gift of his Son we are tempted to cry out in lowliness of heart that man was not worthy that even one of the Persons of the Trinity should become incarnate to save him from his sins. In popular preaching and exposition, such a cry may have a legitimate place ; it is doubtful if it could be justified in serious theology. For man after all, even sinful man, is a creature of worth. The very fact that he is able to have self-conscious relationship with God raises him

very high in the scale of created beings. Moreover the very fact that the second Person of the Trinity became incarnate for man's salvation sets the divine seal to the dignity and worth of man. We have to be careful lest by a mistaken self-depreciation we affront the divine goodness. If man were not a creature of substantial worth it would have been wrong for the Logos to become incarnate for his deliverance. God is the final arbiter of values and God revealed his estimate of man when he gave his Son for man's salvation.

But though the Christian theist dare not, in loyalty to his incarnate Lord, underestimate the worth of man, it is not for him to overestimate that worth and to suggest that for man's salvation there might have occurred more fittingly a three-fold incarnation, and that such an incarnation would have been a more complete revelation of God's boundless love. The argument is plausible, but it is wrecked on the rock-like fact of the Incarnation and, even if it were not, there are considerations which are adequate for its destruction. Man, if he is to be saved at all, is to be saved through the Incarnation of the one Person ; and the fact reminds us not only that man is worthy of this effort for his salvation but also that he is not worthy of any greater effort. Only the most pathetic ignorance of the relative positions of God and man could presume to suggest that it might be well if man had received an even fuller revelation of the divine love than is already his. Man has already been given the fullest revelation of God's love that he can receive and use, and any attempt to bestow a still fuller revelation would imply imperfection in the divine nature. For such an attempt would disregard the principles of justice and subordinate the greater to the less. We have to remember that man's salvation is not a result that is worthy of achievement at any cost. There are limits to the efforts that a perfectly good and all-wise God may legitimately make to save man from his own wrong-doing. Man is not of infinite worth, and therefore his salvation would not justify unlimited effort for its securing. Only God is of infinite worth, and God of course stands in no need of salvation. If there were anything or anyone from whom God needed to be saved his worth would suffer diminution. It is just because God abides un-

troubled and unmoved in complete and self-existent perfection that we can declare his worth to be infinite.

It may be well to note in passing that the truth, that man is not of infinite worth nor his salvation worthy of unlimited effort, is one that is constantly ignored alike in the pulpit, in devotional literature, and in popular expositions of theology. It is probable that this disregard of facts does considerable harm by tending to give man an exaggerated idea of his own importance in the divine scheme of things. It may be flattering to man's vanity to picture God as putting forth infinite efforts for his deliverance, it is assuredly injurious to his judgement and sense of proportion. We need not, of course, suppose that preachers and others when they emphasise God's boundless efforts for man's salvation are primarily concerned, or even concerned at all, to flatter man's vanity. They may be anxious to arouse his self-respect, but their chief aim is to stir him to a sense of the enormity of sin and the infinite love of God towards him. I have tried to show in my book *The Infinity of God*, that man being a finite creature can neither sin infinitely nor be worthy of an infinite love, and I would refer any who are interested to that work for a fuller treatment than would be relevant here (see esp. pp. 51-53, and pp. 153-154).

Provided we remember man's limitations and that, though vastly important in the divine scheme of creation, he is not infinitely important, we are delivered from minimising the grandeur and glory of God by magnifying the position and status of man. When we recollect what man is we can see at once that God would not be good if he strove beyond certain limits for man's salvation. Man is not worthy of salvation at any cost to God; and a God who did seek at all costs to save man might win his gratitude but could hardly command respect for his judgement and sense of proportion. An illustration from human experience may make the point plainer. A man who risks his life to save a friend is honoured and respected because at a rough estimate all average human lives are of equivalent worth. Even if by human standards the rescued is of less importance to the community than the rescuer, it is still felt that it is good that the rescuer should go to his rescue, because it is of great value to the community

that the spirit of self-sacrifice should be manifested from time to time in a conspicuous degree. In this way moral ideals and noble aims are kept before the eyes of men and the average individual is enabled by the force of example to live a little more nobly and courageously than before. Yet even on the human level, where there is a marked difference in importance to the community between rescuer and rescued, we are apt to deprecate the risking of the more important life, or at least we definitely deprecate the more important life placing itself in such a position that it may well be called upon to effect a dangerous rescue. It is an illustration of the working of this principle that public opinion expects a monarch to avoid danger so far as possible both in time of war and in time of peace, and a prime minister to leave to others rescue-work for which he himself may have peculiar qualifications.

If we pass outside humanity, the working of the general principle is plainer. No one expects a man to risk his life to save an ant that has got into difficulties ; no one even expects a man to bestir himself very strenuously in such a cause. If our attitude in this matter were challenged we should justify it by pointing to the relative importance of men and ants ; and we should insist that it would be a definite disregard of the organisation and scale of values of God's universe, if man exposed himself not merely to danger but even to considerable trouble on behalf of an ant. Yet the difference in importance between men and ants is as nothing compared to the difference in importance between men and God. The former is a finite difference vast but measurable, the latter an infinite distance and therefore literally incalculable. Accordingly a God who in his efforts to save man ignored the gulf between the divine and the human, and who was content to act as if God and man were of more or less equal worth, might be an indulgent God and a merciful God, and as such he might win men's gratitude and thanks, but he would not be a perfectly good God, nor a perfectly wise God ; even man, though greatly helped by him, would be obliged to consider him a little foolish and a little lacking in discrimination ; and assuredly whatever else man gave him he could not give him the full homage of an adoring heart.

Worship is an affair both of the heart and of the head, not separately or successively, but simultaneously and concurrently. There is no perfect worship where head and heart are not in complete accord; and there would be disunion between the two if at any time the heart were called upon to worship a God whom the head accounted to have done too much for man. We say not infrequently of this or that human father, that he has done or is doing too much for his children and we reluctantly but definitely condemn him. But we sometimes forget that, if God were not as he is, it would be possible for our heavenly Father to do too much for his earthly children, and that perhaps not infrequently we represent him as so acting. We need to remember that goodness itself can be spoiled by an overplus, and that the goodness of God which evokes the worship of man is not an unlimited and shapeless goodness which has lost all proportion and restraint, but is a goodness controlled and guided in its manifestations by the perfect wisdom and the perfect justice of God.

It is important that there should be no misunderstanding here. We are not denying that God is absolute goodness; on the contrary we should assert that he is. But we are denying that the manifestations to man of the absolute goodness of God have, as manifestations, an absolute quality. We make that denial in the interests of the divine justice. Man as a created being is finite and can never merit or receive the goodness of God in its unlimited fullness. He can and does worship that absolute goodness, existent and manifesting itself in the only sphere adequate for its operation, the perfect being of the eternal Trinity but, so we hold, he would withdraw his worship from that goodness if without qualification it gave itself to him, because then it would have stultified its own nature, for absolute goodness cannot give itself illimitably to the limited. It may sound a paradox, but we believe it to be profoundly true that man can only worship God in his goodness because God is never absolutely good to him.

The point is so important that it may be worth while to emphasise it a little further by drawing a distinction between God's being absolutely good to man and his being perfectly

good to man. It is all the more necessary to do this as both in popular speech and, to some extent, in serious writing 'absolutely' and 'perfectly' have come to be equivalent in meaning. But for our own special purpose it is convenient to stress a difference still recognised in much theological and still more philosophical literature. Observing this distinction we should contend that God is always perfectly good to man, and that that fact is a considerable part of the reason why God evokes man's worship. God is perfectly good to man in that he always acts towards man with a goodness that is proportionate to man's status and condition. God's goodness towards man is always perfect goodness because it is the absolute goodness of God limited in accordance with the needs and deserts of man. On the other hand we should deny that God is ever absolutely good to man, and we should even contend that if he were he would not be absolutely good in himself. God is not absolutely good to man because absolute goodness is goodness without qualification or limit, and man as a finite creature never needs or requires that God should act towards him with an unlimited or absolute goodness, but only with a goodness that is limited and determined by his finite needs.

There is, however, one sphere in which man needs the absolute goodness of God, the sphere of worship. Perfect goodness alone is not sufficient to evoke man's worship; he can only worship perfect goodness where it coincides with absolute goodness, that is, in God. The goodness appropriate to the nature and being of God is goodness unqualified and complete, goodness without limits. In other words the goodness that is perfect for God is absolute goodness. It is the absolute goodness of God that alone evokes man's worship; and in this sense, that he can so know the absolute goodness of God that he offers it his worship, man needs and receives that absolute goodness. Yet though there is an apparent contradiction here with the assertion made above, that man does not need the absolute goodness of God but only that goodness as limited in accordance with human wants and deserts, it is probable that the contradiction is more apparent than real. It is true that man, when he has attained to a certain degree of moral development, can only worship a

God whom he believes to be absolutely good. Yet man cannot grasp, and will never be able to grasp, the absolute goodness of God in the richness of its concrete content. That can be understood and experienced by God alone ; what man understands and experiences, and what is sufficient to evoke his adoring worship, is the perfect goodness of God as manifested towards himself, plus a consciousness of the abstract form of absolute goodness, and plus also the realisation that this absolute goodness, by man conceived only abstractly, is in God completely actualised. The absolute goodness of God is never in its absoluteness the experience or the possession of man, and if it were it would not evoke his worship, for thus to experience and possess absolute goodness is to cease to be man and to become God, and God does not worship himself.

(e) THE RATIONAL GOD

We pass now from the consideration of the moral element in the worshipful to give some regard to its rational or intellectual element. It is sufficiently obvious that no civilised man could worship a God who was devoid of understanding. Even the primitive savage, though he may worship a being whose ways he accounts strange and fantastic, does not suppose that the deity himself is puzzled or bewildered by his actions. The worshipper may not understand what the god is doing, but the god himself is perfectly well aware of the significance of his conduct. It is, moreover, doubtful if even the most primitive man, or indeed man at any stage of his development, has worshipped a god whose ways, though presumably comprehensible to himself, were entirely incomprehensible to possible worshippers. In such a god there would be, if we may use the phrase, nothing for the reason to hold on to ; he would elude and escape us because, having no rational apprehension of him, we could never in any way envisage his being and nature. The utterly incomprehensible is never worshipful ; a god to be a god at all must possess an element of intelligibility.

Moreover, this intelligibility must be an intelligibility relative to man if the god is to number men amongst his

worshippers. It is perfectly possible to imagine a god who was intelligible by beings more intelligent than man, but who was incomprehensible to man himself. Such a god would not be worshipped by man, because man could not understand him, and some understanding of the object that is worshipful is an essential element in worship ; but he might well be worshipped by the beings whose superior intelligence enabled them to have some intellectual grasp of his nature and being. Men then do not worship that which they cannot understand ; and that which can be understood is, at least to the extent to which it can be understood, rational. The rational, that is to say, is an essential element in the divine.

But to evoke worship it is not enough that the divine should be rational, it must be self-consciously rational. A watch, for instance, bears many marks of reason, it is rationally constructed ; but nobody worships a watch. Similarly if one accepts a theistic view of the universe at all one finds in the universe innumerable objects that are rational in the sense that their nature or structure implies a creator possessed of reason. There is an adaptation of means to ends, an appropriateness of structure to environment, a co-ordinating of parts to wholes which, if we are theists at all, irresistibly suggest the work of reason. Yet though there is so much in the universe that is rational, the instructed believer worships none of it, for the rationality of created objects is a rationality imposed from without and of which they themselves are, and must be by their very natures, for ever unconscious.

There are, however, in the universe rational beings who are also self-conscious. Of their number we are naturally most familiar with man but it is not necessary to suppose that there are not other species of rational self-conscious beings besides man. The adherents for instance of a variety of creeds have believed in the existence of spiritual beings of differing kinds, and these beings are certainly thought of as self-conscious and rational. Of none of them, however, has man anything like so adequate a knowledge as he possesses of himself, and it will therefore be well to make man our chief example of a self-conscious rational being. When man in the power of his self-consciousness considers his own

nature he is not moved to offer worship either to his fellows or to himself. His reluctance is due to more than one cause, but in part it is due to the fact, not that he is not rational, but that he is not rational enough. Man's reason fails him both at home and abroad, both in relation to himself and in relation to his environment.

In the first place when man uses his power of rational self-analysis to submit himself to a critical examination, he becomes aware that his understanding of himself is only partial. To a certain extent he knows himself, but that which is known is always shading off into the unknown ; the brightness of self-conscious clarity continually fades away into a penumbra which is neither bright nor particularly open to the inspection and comprehension of reason. Nor does man always feel able to relate that which he sees most clearly in himself to a rational scheme wherein he and all created things shall have their neatly-appointed places. The final verdict of man's rational self-consciousness about himself is that he is to some extent a creature of mystery, intelligible perhaps completely to some higher order of being, but certainly not completely intelligible to himself.

In the second place, man's reason partly fails him in relation to his environment. There is no point in minimising all that reason has accomplished in the explanation of the universe and in harnessing its powers and utilising its possibilities in the service and for the needs of men. If any individual human mind could in itself sum the total of what man's reason has achieved and could visualise that total, not vaguely and abstractly, but in its abounding concrete reality, that mind would shrink back appalled almost at the extent of man's knowledge of the universe. And yet on the whole and in the main those who know the most in any science or art would be the first to confess their ignorance and their consciousness of limitation. Experts in their own realm, they know something of its range and they are conscious how small a portion of its wide territories they have exhaustively explored. Some of them too are aware how little they themselves can do, and how little has been done by others, to relate their particular science or art not merely to the sum total of human knowledge but to other sciences

and arts whose subject-matter is not far different from their own. It may be that man knows enough for life ; it is certain that he does not know enough for knowledge. On the whole he manages to continue to live ; but quite often he fails to explain. Man is rational and self-conscious but he is not conscious of the whole of himself, nor does his reason completely comprehend either himself or his environment.

Man, therefore, is not very likely to be tempted to worship either himself or his fellows once he has attained to some sort of vision of his own limitations and to some sort of realisation of the nature that would be possessed by a being that was completely and comprehensively rational. It is true that slaves have sometimes worshipped, or pretended to worship, their lords, and that subjects have offered adoration, real or feigned, to monarchs ; but it is hardly necessary to labour the point that such occurrences cease to be possible so soon as man attains to an adequate idea of deity. Once that stage is reached all thought of offering worship to any human being vanishes for ever, unless indeed, as sometimes happens, civilisation experiences a relapse and true ideas of God and man are forgotten and replaced by old out-worn conceits and by fancies worthy only of the limbo of forgetfulness.

So long, however, as man remains true to his own best thought he cannot worship a deity who is less than completely rational. Man, of course, seeks other adorable qualities in that which is divine besides the possession of perfect reason ; but at the moment our concern is with this element of perfect rationality or complete understanding. God evokes our worship in part because we believe him to be perfect wisdom. Wisdom, in relation to the temporal and finite, is not simply a comprehension of that which is ; it is also a realisation of that which ought to be, and an understanding of how that which ought to be may most speedily be brought to pass. An all-wise God has, if we may put it so, a mind that comprehends not simply the static, but also the dynamic, a mind that knows men and things not only as they are but also as they have it in them to become. It is probable also that the perfect knowledge of a God possessing complete understanding will extend to areas and regions of which

human knowledge knows nothing at all, except that it is possible that they exist. It is clear enough that, even in spheres of which man has some, even considerable, knowledge, that knowledge must be vastly outstripped by the knowledge of God. We need not hesitate to say that there is no created thing which man knows as its Maker knows it. There may be things of which man has perfect knowledge in the sense that his knowledge of them is adequate for human living, though probably the number even of these things is low; but it is certain that there is nothing of which man has complete knowledge in the sense that he knows all that could be known about it by an all-wise intelligence or, as it might otherwise be put, that he knows it as it is known to God.

Yet the knowledge that is required for the understanding of created things is after all only a limited knowledge, for created things are finite, and a limited intelligence suffices for their comprehension. It is, of course, to be understood that the knowledge of created things that is open to a finite intelligence is knowledge of them within the limits of their createdness. If created things are the work of an infinite Creator, as would be held for instance by Christian theists, it is not within the power of any finite mind, however perfect in its degree and station, and however complete its knowledge of those things as created, to attain to more than a partial and limited knowledge of the Creator whose works they are. In point of fact, man does not completely understand any created thing; even if he did, he could not completely understand its Creator.

But at the same time it is vital to realise that that Creator is not in himself unintelligible. God can be completely understood by an intelligence adequate to the task of comprehending him. That assertion is proved by the fact that God completely understands himself. The divine reason is adequate to the task of understanding the divine being. God is known to himself and in this sense there is no mystery in God. Yet earlier in this study we have urged that man could not worship a God who was not to some extent mysterious. There is no real contradiction between the two positions. As we are sometimes reminded, self-evident

truths are not truths that are evident to everyone ; and similarly the completely intelligible need not be intelligible to all or even to many, it may be intelligible only to one. But for all to whom the completely intelligible is not completely intelligible it is mysterious to the extent that it is not completely intelligible ; and it still remains mysterious even though they may believe that to others or to itself it is not mysterious, but completely comprehensible. Man, as we have argued earlier, could not worship God if he completely understood him, but this does not mean that the divine to evoke man's worship must have in it an element of non-rational mystery. So far from this being the case it is doubtful if man could worship a god whose being he conceived to be in part rational and in part unintelligible, not merely to man or to any other order of being, but also to himself. Man can only worship God if he is in part mysterious; but the mystery must come not from an absence of rationality, but from an excess of it, such excess being, of course, understood not absolutely or, what is the same thing, in relation to God himself, but simply in relation to the limitations of human knowledge. When man looks at God he is in part blinded and his eyes close in adoration, but that which blinds him is not impenetrable darkness, but the glory of abundant light.

We may note certain implications and consequences that follow from the fact that God is completely intelligible to himself. It will be found that these have a definite bearing upon the worshipful quality of the divine. In the first place the fact that God is completely intelligible to himself implies that God is rational through and through. Having a complete understanding of himself, God is in no sense a mystery to himself ; his being is ordered, systematic, regular ; there is no place therein for the unexpected or the startling ; God can never surprise himself, or be puzzled or bewildered. Reason is supreme in the divine life in the sense that there is no place in that life for the irrational, or the absurd, or the nonsensical. One of the things that strikes limited finite man about such a life is its strength. If colloquial phrases may be permitted for their vividness, God is always sure of himself, never at a loss, always completely master of the

situation. And man, who is so often the plaything of forces he cannot control, whether physical, or political, or social, or economic, who so often misjudges a situation, and who not infrequently loses control not merely of his environment but of himself, can readily bow himself in awe before so sovereign a being and seek for his own life something of the perfect poise and unruffled all-comprehensive vision that are characteristic of the life of God.

But also, in certain moods, man may be tempted to feel that in the perfectly rational life of God there must needs be an element of dullness. In human life there is always the possibility of the unexpected. Just because man has not a complete understanding of either himself or his environment he may at any time be taken by surprise ; and surprise, whether pleasant or unpleasant, is a great foe to dullness. Again, because man's reason is not able to master the whole of the subject-matter which attracts its attention, there is in man's life much space for wonder. Man's capacity for wonder covers a wide range and may extend from what is little more than mere bewilderment at some small but unsolved problem to a sense of bafflement and awe in the presence of the ultimate mystery of the universe. But whether the object of his wonder be something great or small, something comparatively trivial or something so exalted that man in his lowliness almost fails to perceive it, man, whilst he wonders, is not dull. The wonderful is a magnificent antidote to boredom.

Two points, however, need to be noted ; they are inter-related but not identical. In the first place, men differ with regard to the wonderful as they do with regard to most other things. One man's wonder is another's commonplace. In part a man's conception of the wonderful depends upon his experience ; unfamiliarity is often a large element in wonder, and many things seem wonderful to those to whom they are new, but quite unexciting and uninteresting to those to whom they have long been familiar. It is an illustration of this principle on the large scale that the wonders of one generation are often the commonplaces of the next. Familiarity has robbed them of their wonderfulness. Thus no one of to-day thinks of the steam-engine as wonderful, because

there is no one now living who has not grown up with the steam-engine. But many people wonder at the wireless, for there are many people who can remember when the wireless did not exist. But no one under twenty supposes that there is anything wonderful about wireless, because everyone under twenty has been more or less familiar with wireless as long as he or she can remember ; and in about another fifty years there may be many scientific marvels at which men will wonder, but the wireless will not be of their number because of its perfect and long-continued familiarity ; unless indeed new discoveries add to it fresh and striking features which for a season will be wonderful to all who knew it only in its old form.

Secondly, men vary in their natural capacity for wonder, and are also able within limits to increase or decrease such natural capacity as they possess. There are souls in whom the capacity for wonder is innately strong. If this capacity is allied with a gift for original thinking it may lead to much discovery and invention. It does not greatly matter whether the stories of Newton and the falling apple, and of Stephenson and the kettle with its lid rising and falling with the pressure of steam are true or not, for they have penetrated to the heart of the matter and shown us that it is sometimes the mark of genius to wonder at that which everyone else takes to be utterly obvious and commonplace. On the other hand, there are pedestrian souls who are born into the world and who seem almost from the dawn of conscious intelligence to settle down solidly and prosaically into it. They go through life with a matter-of-fact calmness which is content to ignore, or which probably never notices, much that to their contemporaries is baffling, wonderful and strange. Sometimes, of course, the exigencies of outward circumstance compel men to become indifferent to the wonderful. Economic necessity and the pressure of modern life debar many from exercising such capacity for wonder as they possess and, thus debarred, they are saved from day-dreaming and star-gazing and are also shut out from creative thought and originality of life and conduct.

It might indeed be reasonably maintained that a considerable part of the art of living is to be found in the right cultiva-

tion of our capacity for wonder. There is a sense in which it is true to say that life is a blend of the wonderful and the commonplace in more or less equal proportions ; there is another sense in which it is true to say that God alone is wonderful and all else ordinary and commonplace. Or it might be urged that all that is is wonderful because it is the handiwork of God, the wonderful and marvellous. But whichever view we take we shall at least agree that it is man's duty so to cultivate and discipline his capacity for wonder that he wonders only at the wondrous and does not waste a God-given faculty on objects unworthy of its exercise. Those in whom the capacity for wonder is strong and apt to spend itself unworthily need to check and curb it lest they lose touch with historic and scientific reality ; whilst others, who by natural temperament do not easily wonder, need to train themselves by careful contemplation of the wondrous to a more ready exercise of one of the elements of man's greatness, his capacity for wonder. The man who does not wonder in the presence of the wonderful has missed a good deal of the glory of his humanity ; and the man who gives the fullness of his wonder to that which is wonderful in but trivial and insignificant degree has prostituted a noble gift to base and unworthy ends and in so doing has brought nearer the destruction of his soul.

In the light of our analysis of the place of wonder in the life of man we are now ready to examine more closely the suggestion that in the perfectly rational life of God there is an element of dullness. Man, we saw, was delivered from dullness in part because he wondered. But in God there can be no wonder that comes from the contemplation of that which is unexplained. God is never baffled or bewildered ; he always knows. It is interesting to enquire whether such complete knowledge is dull. We may begin our enquiry with a word of caution. It must be recognised that in one sense all enquiries into the nature of the divine life are, and must be, largely speculative in character. It is not possible for man to know the divine life from within in its fullness ; the absolute quality of the life of the Creator must be for ever hidden from the knowledge of the created ; it is inconceivable that man should know what it feels like to God

to be God, or that he should be able to grasp the essential quality of any aspect of the divine life as that aspect is known to God himself. Yet thus to acknowledge ignorance does not preclude reverent enquiry; and those who can never know the life of God in its inwardness may yet be in a position to say that that life is of one quality rather than of another. The fact that the eternal Reason drew near to men in the form of man is man's guarantee that his own finite reason is guilty of no irreverence if, not presumptuously, but yet to the utmost of its strength, it also seeks to draw near to the absolute being of God.

It is conceivable that for man complete knowledge would be dull. As things are, a large part of the fascination of knowledge for man is its revelation of his ignorance. The student labours at his studies, the investigator presses on with his research, and each as he gains fresh knowledge, or solves the problem immediately before him, sees opening out new vistas and fresh areas which his reason has not yet made his own. Nor when we speak of knowledge must we use the word with a connotation too narrowly academic. There is a knowledge that does not come from books, however learned, and which cannot be found in laboratories, however adequately equipped; it is that knowledge of humanity that comes from intercourse with men. Here also, as experience grows and knowledge is increased, the individual becomes conscious of how much he has still to learn about his fellows, how dangerous are sweeping generalisations based on little evidence, how necessary it is, if time and strength were adequate, to know each human being by himself, as an entity, having indeed relations with many of his fellows, and yet also solitary and isolated from them. Theoretically it is conceivable that man should attain to an almost complete knowledge of created things, but practically the attaining of such knowledge is indefinitely far away. The span of man's earthly life is brief and with every life that dies much knowledge passes to oblivion. There is little evidence that man will recover all that has been lost in the ages that are gone, or that he will contrive to retain all that may be offered in the ages to come. In the sphere of knowledge man's joy is the joy of search rather than the joy of complete possess-

ion ; and if we imagine for the moment that the search has been completed, we can see also that one great interest, one dominant motive, has been removed from human life, and that that life is to that extent duller than before.

In God there is no seeking for knowledge ; all is known. There is the joy of perfect light ; there is none of the excitement that comes from darkness. But if we are tempted to think that God's perfect knowledge is dull, it is probable that our thought originates in a failure to distinguish between the content of God's perfect knowledge and the content of such perfect knowledge as may conceivably be attainable by man. There is a supreme difference between perfect divine knowledge and perfect human knowledge ; God knows himself. God, that is to say, has as the object of his knowledge his own eternal, self-existent perfect being. Man at best knows God only partially ; God has complete knowledge of himself. That knowledge is perfect bliss, and if there were any lessening in the knowledge there would be a lessening in the bliss. The proverb tells us ' Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise ', but it is never bliss for God to be ignorant of himself. It may be bliss for man to be partially ignorant of God, for there may well be aspects and reaches of the divine being which do not concern man and of which it is better that he should be ignorant. Indeed complete knowledge of God cannot be good for man, for such knowledge transcends the limits of our finiteness and the possession of it, if such a thing were conceivable, would destroy man's humanity. But God, knowing completely the perfect object of knowledge, is in bliss. In such perfect knowledge there is no dullness but only joy unspeakable, for the perfect knower knows the perfect object of knowledge with a knowledge that is itself perfect and complete.

From another angle we can see that the perfect knowledge of God is not dull. God is love, and whatever else love may be, love is never dull. There is an inherent quality about love which precludes dullness. Love is life and joy, and neither life nor joy is dull. The love of God or, as we might truly phrase it, the love that is God is perfect, complete, infinite. Such is the love that is known by the knowledge of God. There is nothing dull in knowing infinite love. Infinite

love is the most marvellous, the most wonderful object of knowledge that there could ever be ; and infinite love is the eternal object of the divine knowledge. We shall remember, too, that the infinity of the object known itself precludes dullness. As man is finite the knowledge within his reach is presumably finite too ; we can imagine the task accomplished and the knowledge attained, and perhaps the result of such a consummation would be dullness. But with God it is otherwise, for God's knowledge is knowledge of an infinite object, the divine love ; and, though the knowledge where-with that infinite love is known is itself infinite and in this sense adequate to its object, the infinite comprehension of an infinite object is by its very nature exempt from the dullness that might attend upon the consummated finite knowing of a finite known.

It is legitimate to enquire whether God eternally wonders at himself. Quite clearly, if we are to think of an eternal wonder as an element in the divine life, that life is so far delivered from the possibility of that dullness which some might think to be involved in its perfect rationality. It is of course true that both here and hereafter God is an object of wonder to man. Beyond man's comprehension in his infinite being God inevitably arouses man's awe and wonder and admiration whenever man turns his thoughts towards the divine. But is God wonderful to himself ? He completely understands himself, there is no wonder arising from inadequate knowledge ; and perfect love is the essence of his triune being, there is no wonder arising from disharmony of spirit. Further, it is perhaps doubtful whether any place is left for wonder in a being who sees that he must be as he is, not from any external necessity but from the internal coherence of his own nature. If we can think of God as wondering at himself, such wonder certainly seems to imply either that his being is not internally conditioned by a necessity of its own nature or that, though thus conditioned, God is himself ignorant of the fact. Both conclusions are of course unacceptable to Christian theism. It is, therefore, for various reasons undesirable to suppose that wonder is an element in the being of God. Though we cannot hope, or indeed reverently wish, to know the

divine being from within in its fullness, we may suppose that, for our human understandings, one aspect of that being is more adequately pictured as a profoundly calm and completely understanding acquiescence in its own existence than as a state of surprise, however carefully safeguarded, or as a condition of wonder, however judiciously qualified and controlled.

It remains to note how far these thoughts about the presence or absence of wonder in God shed light upon the worshipful quality of the divine. We have concluded that God does not wonder at himself and that the element of wonder is not an element in his being. It is, of course, to be recognised that this position is not at all the same thing as saying that God is not wonderful, or that man does not wonder at him. God is wonderful in himself, but he is not wonderful to himself. Wonder is an element in all true religion, and it is partly because God is wonderful that he is also worshipful. But part of the wonder of God for man is that he is not wonderful to himself. We realise most fully the marvellous greatness, goodness and love of God when we remember that, though they bow us to our knees in awe and wonder and adoration, God himself is so great, so good, so loving, that his greatness and goodness and love are not wonderful to him. To him they are only what is to be expected, normal and fitting elements in his life.

The same point may be made a little differently by saying that God does not wonder that he is as he is because he would be surprised if he were other than he is. In other words, God takes his infinite perfection for granted. That fact, when realised, is tremendously evocative of worship. Here is a being in whom man finds and acknowledges every perfection. They are present in their highest degree, elevated to a level of perfection, as man admits, quite beyond his own reach and attainment. Yet this divine being, thus infinitely perfect, neither wonders at his exaltation nor fears lest he may fall. He is not one who has striven upward to a throne nor one who is afraid lest his sovereignty be taken from him; he is an eternal King for whom anything but kingship is unthinkable, and as such a King he is worshipful as not even he himself could be, did any element of wonder

or of doubt mar the splendid glory of his sovereignty.

(f) THE HOLY GOD

Our next task is to examine the extent to which holiness is an element in the worshipful. Holiness is an idea which has had a long history and which in the course of that history has experienced considerable development and modification. In origin the holy is closely akin to that which is taboo, and its holiness is conceived on quasi-physical lines. There is a kind of latent power about the holy which causes it to inflict strange and startling shocks upon those who for one cause or another are not insulated against its effects. There is a right relation to that which is holy and those who, wittingly or unwittingly, fail to observe or preserve it, incur an almost automatic penalty. It is possible enough that even amongst the most primitive peoples there was an ethical element in the idea of holiness; at the least it was considered fitting and proper that men should maintain right relations towards that which was holy, and the fitting and the proper are ethical ideas. But it is also certain that there was much in men's conception of the holy that was not ethical at all according to modern ideas but rather magical or quasi-scientific or merely physical and material. These, of course, are later distinctions which primitive man would neither use nor understand; and any attempt to analyse too closely his idea of holiness doubtless fails through over-exactness of definition. All that we are concerned to emphasise at the moment is that the idea of holiness had in it at the outset various elements besides that ethical element which, though probably present from the first, was neither dominant nor particularly powerful.

But both in Palestine and in the West this ethical element, at first so slight, was to undergo a remarkable development. In this development the Jewish prophets played a prominent part. They turned a tribal deity into a moral God, and the religious genius of Israel enabled it to apprehend the transformation and to perceive that it was good. Christianity carried further the process begun long before and has no hesitation in declaring that the highest moral standards

that its best exponents can conceive are those most in accordance with the holiness of God. It is to be noted that Christianity asserts not merely that the holiness of God is profoundly ethical, but also that its ethical quality is such as is not, at least as yet, completely comprehensible by man. As man travels upward morally he sees further into the nature of the divine holiness ; whilst conversely moral failure and infirmity diminish his capacity to understand the holiness of God. For the Christian that holiness is as it were the treasure-house wherein are stored those superlative moral ideals to which man in his sinfulness and weakness has not yet attained. Man knows them not, yet they are eternally real in the life of God ; and as man grows in morality of life and holiness of soul he approximates more closely to those absolute moral verities which for him are as yet unrealised, perhaps not even glimpsed, ideals, but which are eternal actualities in the holiness of God.

It is, then, important to remember that for an instructed faith the holiness of God is profoundly ethical. It would be quite impossible for an adherent of a developed religion such as Christianity to worship a God whose holiness was defective in its moral quality. Gods, of course, have often been worshipped in the past who were thought to be holy, but who were certainly not moral as Christians understand morality ; but then neither were those gods holy as Christians understand holiness. For the Christian theist goodness is an integral element in holiness, and it would be impossible for him to worship God as holy if he could not also at the same time worship him as good. Yet, though the holiness of God is thus profoundly ethical, we should greatly err if we supposed that holiness and goodness were synonymous, or that the holy and the good were terms of which one meant neither more nor less than the other. In the holiness of God there is goodness, but the holiness of God is something more than good. It is not, indeed, better than goodness, there is nothing better than the perfect goodness of God nor could there be, but the divine holiness is not only good, it is also something other than good.

It is comparatively easy to recognise that there is more in the divine holiness than simple goodness, but it is by no

means easy to analyse precisely the nature of that something more. It is probable enough, indeed, that such analysis is in the last resort impossible because we are here concerned with something fundamental. Just as no explanation can make music intelligible to one born totally deaf, and no description give an understanding of sight to one born blind, so nothing can make goodness comprehensible to a being devoid of conscience, or holiness intelligible to one destitute of those powers of mind or spirit which alone can know it as it is. In all explanation we come to a point at which we reach either the self-evident or the inexplicable, and if those to whom we offer our explanations cannot see the self-evident or are unwilling to accept the inexplicable as real, we can only tell them that we can do no more. On the other hand, we must always press our attempts at comprehension to the furthest possible point, and never be too quick to assume that we have reached either the self-evident or the inexplicable.

Certainly in the case of the divine holiness we can carry our analysis beyond the recognition of the element of goodness. For the divine holiness includes something a good deal less intelligible to us than goodness. The holiness of God includes the otherness of God, that element of the divine being that prevents us from ever being easily familiar or genially at home with God. God is other than man, not quantitatively but qualitatively distinct from him. The divine being is always beyond man's understanding; man can know it in part, he can argue to it by analogy and by the method of eminence and by the method of negation; he can, we believe, know all that he needs to know about the being of God for the purpose of his own actual living; yet that being in the fullness of its absolute essence is not known to man, and never can be known, for the less cannot comprehend the greater. It is therefore always with a sense of awe that man should draw near to God and this awefulness of the divine nature is an integral part of the divine holiness. Probably it is not very helpful at the present day to talk about the uncanniness of God because the expression, though it gives partly the note we want, is too definitely lacking in moral content. But if we could realise the uncanniness of

perfect goodness that eternally exists, and the uncanniness of infinite love that lives, we should understand the divine holiness a little less inadequately.

It should be noted also that the divine holiness is that quality in God which causes his reaction against sin to be as it is. That reaction is probably something more than the reaction of that which is good to that which is evil. On this point, indeed, there may be legitimate difference of opinion ; but it is at least arguable that there is more suggestion of life and fire in the reaction of the divine holiness against sin than there is in the reaction of the divine goodness. We must not, of course, be held to imply that there is the faintest divergence or discrepancy between the divine qualities in action or reaction ; and it may be that it is only the somewhat weak amiability which is at times confused with goodness that leads us to feel that the holiness of God is more forceful, more burning, more terribly alive in its reaction against sin than is the divine goodness. Yet it is significant that we should speak much more readily of fearing the holiness of God than we should of fearing his goodness, and that we should more naturally explain the exclusion of the sinful from the nearer presence of God by the fact that God is holy than by the fact that he is good.

So strongly have men felt that their sinfulness outrages the holiness of God, and that the divine holiness would not remain unmoved or apathetic in the face of evil, but would go forth to destroy it, that they have constantly overlooked the fact that in this very conviction, terrible though it is, there is yet ground for hope. For, after all, it is the holiness of God that furnishes some of the strongest evidence for belief in the possibility of deliverance for the sinner. The sinner himself may be content to come to terms with his sin ; the morally indifferent by whom he is so often surrounded may see little or no harm in that which troubles him ; there may be those who glibly explain his sin away as something physical or pathological, requiring treatment perhaps, but certainly not demanding remorse or anguish of spirit or deep-seated penitence. But the one force or power which will never make peace with his sin, which will fight against that sin until it is overthrown, is the holiness of God. That

holiness is the living reaction of God against all that is sinful and evil ; and it is far easier to imagine all the laws of nature broken than it is to suppose that there can be even for a moment anything of compromise between God's holiness and man's sin. Against sin the holiness of God goes forth mercilessly, ruthlessly, fighting until the enemy is dead.

In that grim and terrible fact there is hope for all whose hearts are not wholly set upon evil. Sin is the ruin of man's life not all at once, but by degrees. Its growth is sometimes slow, it is always insidious and subtle. But it is intensely persistent, it is eager to occupy the whole ground of man's heart ; and for man, so long as there is sin in his heart, there is no true or perfect peace. He is divided against himself, the good that he would, he does not ; and the evil that he would not, that he does. St. Paul wrote the whole sorry story long ago ; it has been re-enacted in countless lives since then. To many of those lives deliverance from sin has come, as it came to St. Paul himself, through the holiness of God. That holiness, being intensely ethical, can have no parley or truce with sin, but also, because of its moral integrity, it can never injure or destroy anything which is beautiful or good or true. The beauty may not yet be perfect, the goodness be still faint and rudimentary, the truth not yet completely found or wholly loved, but the holiness of God is quick to discern moral potentialities and is very gentle with the smoking flax and the bruised reed. Every possibility of goodness is cherished and nursed with a tenderness that is the reverse side of that grim hostility against sin which is ever shown by the divine holiness. It is just because the holiness of God flames forth so unrelentingly against sin and evil that it warms and cherishes so tenderly each feeble half-hearted effort towards the good, the beautiful and the true ; and the converse holds with equal force, it is just because all that brings nearer the reign of beauty, truth and goodness is so unspeakably precious to the holiness of God that that holiness is inflexible in its hostility to all sin and evil. In our times of wickedness, in our times even of indolence and half-hearted moral effort, the thought of the divine holiness terrifies and appals us ; but in our times of moral effort and earnest upward striving the

thought of God's holiness is our strength and stay, for we know that that holiness alone is sufficient gently to withdraw, or fiercely to tear away, from our lives the things that will eternally destroy us if they are not cast forth here and now.

The holiness of God, like all the other attributes of God, is perfect. It is therefore in the fullness of its being beyond our human comprehension. We have known lesser degrees of holiness, we have tried perhaps to secure some measure of holiness in our own living, and we have known men and women who have attained to a holiness far beyond our own. History, too, can tell us of those who have attained great sanctity in thought and word and deed, holy saints who by the grace of God and by long and toilsome effort have won their way to that high level of life and thought which men call heroic sanctity. But it has been a costly, striving business, having in it, indeed, rich joy and profound happiness, but also the anguish of tears and the sob of penitence, and when all was accomplished, those who had achieved most were those most conscious how lengthy was the road that still led onward to perfection. It is all so different when we contemplate the holiness of God. Here is an effortless holiness, and yet a holiness which infinitely transcends the fruit of our noblest striving. This is a holiness which lives in its own right, a holiness which was never won and which, therefore, is exempt from all fear of loss, the eternal, ever-living, self-existent holiness which cannot change or alter, but abides for ever immoveably the same.

And yet though thus statically and unshakeably perfect, the divine holiness is never to be thought of as indifferent, or apathetic, or dead. It is still with the stillness of the infinitely deep, yet it is active as a white-hot flame that knows no diminution. It is a living holiness because it is the holiness of the living God. The manifestations of its life vary, as we should expect, with the sphere in which they are displayed. Here on earth we see the divine holiness fostering all that is noble and worthy in men, and implacable in its hostility to all sin and evil and to anything that may contribute to the increase of their sway. The divine holiness is not primarily concerned with created material things, for

these in themselves can neither be holy nor unholy ; the primary interest of God's holiness is with the souls of men for these alone can truly seek or shun the gift it has to offer. But in a secondary sense the divine holiness is concerned with merely material things, as things that can help forward or delay the growth of holiness in the souls of men. Thus the divine holiness is not indifferent to the existence of a slum, considered simply as a group of overcrowded tumble-down houses, just because the existence of such an undesirable block of buildings makes it harder for those who dwell in them and (a point sometimes forgotten) for those who do not, to be holy. Yet here, as always, the primary concern of the divine holiness is not with the merely material, in this case the buildings, but with the spiritual, in this case the souls who are influenced by the existence of the buildings, their owners, their occupiers, those who have occasion to visit them, and all who, in a greater or less degree, are influenced by them.

What will be the final result of the manifestations of God's holiness in this world of his creating we do not know ; but we are certain that those manifestations will never change their fundamental character nor cease to encourage righteousness and strive against evil. God cannot lie, nor can he repent nor be untrue to himself, and the divine holiness will continue, so long as the earth lasts, to battle for the souls of men, to be inflexibly hostile to all that is unlovely, or false, or evil, in those souls, and to be unshakeably loving and tender to all that they have of loveliness or righteousness or truth. We are told sometimes that God hates sin but loves the sinner ; we are disloyal to the divine holiness if we suppose that God can love the sinner as a sinner. What God loves is the soul of man in so far as it is good ; but in so far as it is evil the divine holiness reacts against it, and it is displeasing to the eyes of God. It is necessary, indeed, to be careful in our analysis. God always loves the souls of men ; whether those souls be saintly or sinful, he loves them in the sense that he wills their good. But that which is good for the saint is not good for the sinner, and that which is good for holiness of soul is not good for sinfulness of soul. All God's dealings with men are manifestations

of his love and his holiness, but from the human side it is easy to miss the underlying principles that give the manifestations their unity, and to note only the marked diversity in their effects. There is no dichotomy in God, nor is a kind of dualism an integral element in the divine nature ; it is just because God is loving and holy that he deals both with the saint and with the sinner as he does ; God has not one set of principles when he deals with goodness and another set when he deals with sin ; in all his manifestations God himself is precisely the same. The differences come from the human end. God's holiness, for instance, looks different, seems different, is differently experienced, according as one is saint or sinner, or according as at the moment one is striving towards righteousness or relapsing into sin. The holiness seems different, but is really precisely the same. In such cases it is the eyes that differ, not the object seen.

It is probable enough that of the various spheres in which the holiness of God is manifested, the human is the one in which there is the greatest diversity in its perception. This conclusion seems reasonable when we remember that it is in the human sphere that there is apparently the greatest variety amongst the percipients. It is moral diversity amongst those who perceive it that creates the main divergencies in the perception of the divine holiness, and it is in the human sphere that this moral diversity is most marked. If, as we are entitled to do as Christian theists, we assume the existence of orders of spiritual beings more stable in their moral equilibrium than ourselves, we can note the correspondingly greater unanimity in their perception of, and reaction to, the divine holiness. It is clear, for instance, that an order of created but perfectly sinless spiritual beings, such as Christian tradition has pictured in the angels, would all respond to the divine holiness in very similar fashion. None would be repelled or alarmed by it, all would find it inspiring and attractive. Untroubled by guilty consciences such a sinless order of spiritual beings would have no cause to fear the divine holiness, for there would be nothing in their lives that merited its condemnation. On the other hand we are perhaps wrong in suggesting that they would find the divine holiness inspiring, for it is a little difficult to see how

beings, by definition sinless, could need or use inspiration. It is probably not far from the truth to think of such an order of beings needing the presence of the divine holiness in much the same sort of way as flowers need sunlight, and as turning to that holiness and profiting by its sanctifying rays as easily and as naturally as flowers expand in the warm rays of the sun. But however we picture the relation of these sinless beings to the divine holiness, it is quite clear that that relation is a much more unified relation than the relation to the divine holiness at present sustained by a morally divergent humanity.

Yet, even so, it is clear that in an order of sinless beings there must be certain differences in their perception of God's holiness caused by differences in the percipients. We may or may not be attracted by mediæval speculations about the necessity for each angel, because pure form, to constitute a distinct species, but we can at least see that if there is to be an order of spiritual beings at all, there must be some means of securing their individual separateness. We need not in the least suppose that the individual separateness of sinless beings is as marked and definite as our own human separateness from one another, but if such separateness exists at all, it is possible that it has as one of its results a certain divergency in perceiving and reacting to the divine holiness. Our ignorance of the mode of existence proper to created sinless beings of the kind we have described prevents us going further than this. We cannot even be sure that their individual separateness is such as to cause a difference in the content of their perception of the divine holiness ; it may be that it is only the individual acts of perceiving that are, as psychological experiences, severally distinct.

Similar conclusions emerge if we assume the existence of an order of beings wholly, or almost wholly, sinful. There are certain difficulties in the way of imagining a wholly evil order of beings. Evil in itself is a disruptive, disintegrating force, and it is doubtful if a wholly evil being could exist. The point may be illustrated rather superficially by the need for honour amongst thieves, and more profoundly by the reflection that there is nothing that exists that is out of relation to God and that, since to be in a relation to God is

always in a measure good, it follows that there is nothing wholly evil. The argument, thus succinctly stated, will bear development. It is an argument within the limits of Christian theism and has as its basis the Christian doctrine of creation. All that is, is due ultimately to the divine activity in creation, and is maintained in existence by the continued exercise of the sustaining power of God. Now to be created and sustained by God is in itself a good thing.

It is worth noting, too, in passing, that it is a good thing on either of two possible doctrines of creation. The traditional doctrine of creation is, of course, that God created *ex nihilo*. In opposition alike to uncritical thinking, which tends instinctively to argue from human experience and to think of God as creating and fashioning his works from pre-existent material, and also in hostility to the consciously thought out and carefully formulated dualism by no means uncommon in antiquity, Christian thinkers sought to establish the absolute sovereignty of God and the complete unity of the universe by insisting that creation was creation out of nothing. The doctrine is both attractive and profound; at one stroke it eliminates any thought of some pre-existent matter, inexplicable in origin and only more or less amenable to the divine purpose. From the outset God is lord of his universe, and all things are in the hollow of his hand. All things having begun as he ordained, it may reasonably be supposed that the end of all things also will be in accordance with his ordinance, and that, though to our short-visioned eyes there may seem many almost insuperable obstacles and hindrances, yet at the last all things will 'return to perfection through him from whom they took their origin', and God be at the end of the temporal process as he was at its beginning, all in all.

Yet it is worth noting that the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* is not without difficulty. We need not perhaps take very seriously the objection that it is easy to give a kind of positive content to the nothingness out of which the world was made, and to suppose it a kind of formless nebulousness which omnipotence could shape into a universe. After all, it is never easy to be true to our deepest thoughts, and no one escapes either the temptation to slip back into popular,

shallow thinking, or the tricks that our imaginations play upon us ; but the infirmities of our weaker moments can hardly be allowed to upset the results of our most serious thinking, if these seem otherwise securely grounded. But there is a more serious difficulty that can be brought against the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*. The nature of this difficulty can best be realised by enquiring whether creation out of nothing is really an intelligible conception for a Christian theist. It is possible to urge that it is not. We might, for instance, contend that that which is created comes into being and begins to exist. Its being and existence are not self-originated, they depend for their reality upon God. It is possible, therefore, to make something of a case for the view that God created not so much out of nothing as out of himself.

There is a sense in which this position comes very close to the traditional teaching. According to that teaching the pre-existent Logos was the Father's Agent in the work of creation. In the Logos, as the eternal Reason of God, there abide the archetypes or ideal forms of all created things ; and creation took place in accordance with the Reason of God. When, that is to say, created things began to be, it was not a blind creation, not a speaking of a word of power of which the results would be quite unknown to him who spoke it. On the contrary, the creation was an ordered creation ; we may not accept the details of it as set forth in the Book of Genesis, but the underlying principle of the narrative, that the work of creation was a true expression of an ordered scheme present to the mind of God, is profoundly true. In this sense the holders of the traditional view would agree that God created not so much out of nothing as out of himself.

The real crux of the problem is to define the original locus of the matter of created things. That their form came from the mind of God is not in dispute, but whence their matter came is subject for debate. The traditionalists hold that it came quite literally from nowhere, that it was not, and that then it was. Their opponents would urge that the matter of created things, not being self-caused, must have come from somewhere, and they would contend that it came from

God. Yet this position, at first sight plausible, has its own serious difficulties. In the first place, it is not at all obvious what can be meant by saying that matter came from God. God is a spirit, and we cannot, without grotesque confusion of thought, think of matter proceeding from him as a kind of shadowy effluence or emanation. It is not legitimate to attempt to get matter from spirit by, on the one hand, diluting the matter to a kind of ghostlike consistency, and, on the other, slightly materialising the spiritual. Yet simply to say that matter came into being by the fiat of God is to accept the traditional position.

But even if we assume this serious preliminary difficulty overcome and urge, as is perhaps legitimate, that, though matter came from God, we cannot as created beings completely understand this essential prelude to creation, there yet remain serious difficulties for those who adopt the position that matter came from God. For if matter came from God in some other sense than that it came into being by an act of the divine will, we seem obliged to conclude that matter is in a sense part of the eternal being of God and, as such, co-eternal with deity. From this position it is but a short step, if indeed it be a step at all, to belief in an eternal creation, and to the view that the world is necessary to God as an essential means of self-expression. Such conclusions are not in themselves philosophically absurd or even hard to defend. A philosopher so eminent as Aquinas, for instance, held that to believe in the eternity of the world was philosophically a perfectly tenable position ; and it is clear enough from his writings that he might easily have made this position his own were it not that he accepted the traditional view of creation as a truth given to man by revelation.

In spite of the vogue that is being enjoyed to-day by an influential neo-scholasticism, it is hardly possible for most of us either to state or to solve our problems precisely on the lines laid down by the great St. Thomas. Yet here, as so often elsewhere, he points us to the true solution and even gives us a glimpse of the way in which it can be commended to the thought of our own day. The doctrine of eternal creation was rejected by St. Thomas, not on philosophical grounds, but because it was contrary to revelation. It may

be rejected in our own day also, again not because it is contrary to the tenets of the philosophers, but because it is not true to religious experience and is defective in religious value. To narrow the problem to the point which is our immediate concern, we feel that to hold that the matter of created things came to be not by the mere fiat of God, but in some mysterious way from God himself is unduly to exalt the creature. It is not the verdict of our religious consciousness that we are thus closely knit to the divine ; rather are we conscious that such worth as we possess is due, not to any metaphysical kinship of being with the Most High, but to the moral and spiritual fact that we are called to be his servants and his friends. Moreover unduly to exalt the creature is to depreciate his maker. If the matter of created things came from God in some sense other than that he created it from nothingness, then God does not so far transcend his creatures as our religious experience assures us that he does.

It remains to note that on either view of creation sin remains an equally difficult problem. In both views created things owe their forms to God, and sin is equally bewildering and unintelligible whether we suppose the matter of created things to have come *ex nihilo*, or to have come from God himself. In either case there is nothing intractable in matter or inconsistent with the nature and being of God ; and neither on the one view of creation nor on the other is it in any way obvious why created things should have departed so far as we believe them to have departed from the mind and purpose of God.

Finally, lest in our discussion of creation there should seem to any an undue positiveness of tone, an assurance of conviction where some would prefer a quiet and humble uncertainty, we would add here an expression of our sympathy with the position of those who are content simply to express their inability to give any explanation either of the mode of creation or its reason. It is possible enough that in this matter a reverent agnosticism is the true position, and that we should simply take ourselves and all created things for granted without seeking to discover how or why we came to be. Yet in fairness to the mind of man it must be pointed out that such reverent agnosticism must be the conclusion

of a process of intense intellectual effort and not a substitute for it. That we do not know may often be the final verdict of man's reason, but that verdict will always be more readily accepted, and more widely trusted in the concrete living of life, when to the assertion of our ignorance reason can add her grave assurance that she has striven to the utmost of her power to turn our nescience into knowledge.

Our fairly full discussion of the two views of creation that are most readily compatible with Christian theism has brought nothing to light which would weaken our conviction that to be created and sustained by God is in itself a good thing. That conviction led us to examine the doctrine of creation lest we should find ourselves to have been convinced on insufficient evidence ; we are now free to resume the main tenour of our argument, satisfied it is good to be created and sustained by God. The point was of some importance to us because we were considering whether it is possible for a Christian theist to believe in the existence of an order of beings who are wholly evil. We can now see that there is a sense in which a belief in the existence of such beings is impossible. All beings, evil as well as good, have been created and are held in being by God. However much created beings may abuse the opportunities afforded to them by the fact that they are created, the relation of createdness which they sustain towards God their Creator is in itself good.

Christian theism is vitally concerned to insist that whatever has been created was well created, that it was good that it should be. To take up any other position is to carry back evil into the being of God and to provide man with a deity metaphysically unsatisfactory because lacking in unity, and morally impossible because in part evil. It is necessary indeed to safeguard ourselves against misunderstanding. We are not in the least concerned to deny that created beings have misused their lives, though we are concerned to add that they need not have done so for such misuse was in no sense inevitable, nor do we hold that all that now exists ought to exist. We should maintain for instance that there are people alive in the world who ought never to have been born. They owe their existence not so much to the creative

activity of God as to the misuse of human free-will. It is one of the great responsibilities of human freedom that it is within our power to bring into being, or to abstain from bringing into being, other human souls endowed with a like freedom to ourselves. All such souls have God as the ultimate ground of their being, but, when it would have been better if they had not been born, their existence is only in accordance with the consequent, and not with the antecedent, will of God, to use a distinction earlier discussed. Yet even such souls, though they ought not to have come into being, and would not have come into being had their parents exercised their freedom rightly, and though they may themselves make grievous misuse of their freedom, are not as touching their createdness evil.

The point may perhaps be made plainer by the use of a concrete illustration. We may take the case of Judas Iscariot and, in order really to test our position, we may regard him as he is popularly understood, as the supreme monster of villainy. Historically that view may hardly be accurate, grievous though the sin of Judas undoubtedly was, but to adopt it will make our illustration crucial. Judas therefore we suppose to have been deeply steeped in sin, one whose crowning act of betrayal was but the culmination of a life long given to evil. Finally this evildoer denies himself any opportunity of repentance by taking his life with his own hand and dying as he had lived, in sin. If any soul is eternally lost, it is Judas as his life has been popularly understood. We know nothing of the birth of Judas or of his upbringing, and we cannot therefore raise the question whether his parents were justified in giving him birth. But, be that as it may, his exercise of his own free-will was such that, if it can be said of any man, it can most certainly be said of him that it were good for him if he had not been born. Yet even in the case of Judas a Christian theism that is true to its principles must maintain that, even if we assume that his parents ought never to have given him birth, and though we recognise that his life was very evil, yet that life, as touching its createdness, was not evil but good. Christian theism cannot wholly explain why God should have given us power to bring into being those for whom it would have

been better if they had not been born ; yet we can vaguely see that perhaps only in this way could we realise the greatness of the scope and the awful responsibility of our free-will. But this at least is certain, that so far as those unfortunates owe their being to God (and God is always the ultimate ground of their being) that being is good ; anything that is evil comes always from the human side.

Recognising then as the result of our fairly full enquiry that there is no order of beings which is utterly and in every sense evil, we have as our next task to note the reaction of the most evil beings that there are to the divine holiness. In the first place we may conjecture that even the most evil beings are only able to react at all to the divine holiness in virtue of their goodness. If there were, as we do not believe there to be, that which was utterly and in every sense evil it would apparently be unable to sustain any relation whatsoever to God. The perfectly good and the completely evil are utterly incompatible entities, and the reaction of those who are very evil to the holiness of God is only made possible by the existence in them of that which is good. It is in virtue of their createdness that even the most evil beings are able to react as they do to the divine holiness. They themselves determine the quality and content of that reaction, but the power to react at all is a gift of the mercy of God and in itself good.

It is reasonable to suppose that the very evil react to the divine holiness with considerable unanimity. At one in having their hearts set upon evil they will be at one also in loathing and shrinking from and fearing the divine holiness. To them it will not be welcome as a source of righteousness and as a power imparting sanctity of life but fearful as the fount of a judgement that must inevitably condemn. It is, however, unlikely that there would be the same degree of unanimity amongst the very evil in reacting to the divine holiness as we found it reasonable to expect in a sinless order of beings. For the diversity amongst the very evil is greater than the diversity amongst the sinless. It would seem, therefore, that the reactions of the very evil to the divine holiness would not merely differ from one another as individual psychological experiences, but would also differ

in some degree in content. This divergence of experience would be in a measure determined by the form and extent of the evil present in the experiencing soul.

We are now in a position to consider, in the light of our analysis of the divine holiness, to what extent that holiness is evocative of worship. It will be convenient to move upwards from the very sinful to the sinless. The very sinful, in proportion as they are very sinful, are not attracted but repelled by the divine holiness, and there is no worship without attraction. The very sinful fear God's holiness, but neither love it nor desire it. So far as they have power they oppose it and exclude it ; their wills are set against it, and they do not willingly suffer it to be manifested in their lives. Yet just to the extent to which there remain in the lives of the very sinful purity of heart and sanctity of soul, the call of the divine holiness is heard and reverence paid to its intrinsic excellence. As we have urged, it is probable enough that there is no wholly evil being, and we may therefore legitimately suppose that there is no being who has so far destroyed an innate capacity to respond to the holiness of God that he does not at times acknowledge the claim of the divine holiness to his allegiance. Such acknowledgment may be of the slightest and most rudimentary kind, and may be made only at the most infrequent intervals, yet so far as it goes it is worship and as such, stunted and deformed though it be, acceptable to God.

The very sinful are those whose wills are definitely set upon evil ; the dominant tendency of their lives is towards that which is bad ; the hold of goodness upon their lives is uncertain and insecure, and the divine holiness has for them but a faint and transient attractiveness, and evokes their fear more often than their worship. But when we turn to consider those whom we may describe as the occasionally sinful we discern a less one-sided situation. These are they who sway uncertainly between good and evil, who feel the call to sanctity and at the same time are not unconscious of the pride of life, or the lure of the flesh, or the fascination of the easy attainment of low ideals. These souls have not yet lost the vision of God's holiness ; it might be clearer when they see it, and they might see it much oftener than they do,

but at times they see it with sufficient clarity to feel its unspeakable charm and fascination and for a little season they forget all else, content simply to worship and adore. But the mood fades, and then for them the divine holiness becomes something rather terrible, something cold and chill, a setter-up of ideals altogether beyond the reach of those who are not mere spirits, but spirits with bodies in whose veins the blood runs passionate and warm.

Yet even when the divine holiness is thus regarded, it wins from the occasionally sinful a measure of honour and respect that falls far short of perfect worship and yet is not altogether alien to it. For, though now accounted cold and unattainable, the divine holiness is still regarded with something of wistful longing, as men in the fevered heat of a tropical valley might gaze at the far-off snow-clad summit of a mountain that none could ever climb. Whilst this phase lasts there is hope, for there is still consciousness of the attractiveness of God's holiness, and where men are attracted to the divine attributes worship is not far away. But though there is hope, there is also cause for fear, for the sense of the warmth of the divine holiness is fading away and the sinner is beginning to forget that the holiness of God is man's one hope of rescue from the power of sin. When man forgets that the divine holiness goes forth ceaselessly to rescue and redeem, he forgets also to worship; and he begins to remember that God's holiness also goes forth ceaselessly to punish and avenge; and he begins to remember, too, to dislike and to fear.

Next above those whom we have described as the occasionally sinful come those who are seeking the good. In the former class were to be found the morally unstable, who sway indefinitely between good and evil, with no deliberate and sustained pursuit of either; in the latter class are those whose hearts are set upon righteousness. They also, of course, are occasionally sinful in the sense that from time to time they sin, but they are distinguished from our former class by the fact that they are not morally indeterminate, but are trying consciously and steadily to press onward and upward. Because it will be convenient to have a short term to describe them, we may call them the righteous, recognising

that righteousness in the full sense of the term is rather their goal than their present possession.

The righteous respond to the holiness of God in various interrelated ways. In the first place they feel the attractiveness of the divine holiness with a force that is impossible in the case of the occasionally sinful, and still more impossible in the case of the very evil. The righteous are striving to attain holiness ; God possesses it. That which they hope to become, he is. Moreover, it is not that God has achieved his goal rather more quickly than man. His holiness is not the consummation of a process ; it is an eternally existent fact ; God does not become holy, he is holy. His is the original holiness that is the archetype and pattern for all lesser forms of holiness. Man is holy just in proportion as, within the limits of his humanity, he imitates and repeats the holiness of God. The righteous, therefore, who are those who would fain be holy, are very deeply stirred by the contemplation of the eternal self-existent holiness of God. Their own efforts towards holiness have given them an understanding of its character, they know something of what holiness is like from within, and they are therefore correspondingly awed and impressed by the vision of absolute holiness abiding unmoved in its static perfection. In the presence of holiness such as this, the righteous recognise that there is only one attitude that is proper for the spirit of man, the attitude of lowly, loving worship. Such worship is man's spirit offering its homage to an ideal of perfect holiness which is also completely actual.

The righteous are aware that in its actuality the divine holiness possesses a fullness of concrete being which is beyond their power of detailed apprehension. It is not merely that man's ideal of perfect holiness actually exists ; it is rather that man's ideal of perfect holiness is only a comparatively faint understanding of the perfect holiness that actually exists. Psychologists of a certain type are fond of suggesting that we impute reality to our religious ideals in an unconscious attempt to make our wishes come true ; it is worth noting that for the Christian theist the perfect actually exists before it subsequently becomes both the basis and the consummation of our religious ideals. Perfect holi-

ness existed before man had any idea of holiness or even existed at all, and even now man's noblest and most exalted ideas of holiness fall short, in completeness and perfection, of the eternal holiness that actually exists. This fact is a tremendous stimulus to the worship of the righteous. They bow themselves in adoration before a holiness which they already know to be wonderful beyond all the things of earth; and also they are aware of the incompleteness of their knowledge, and that if they knew more, that holiness would seem to them yet more marvellous and adorable than even now it is.

Nor is that all. The righteous on occasion realise, sometimes perhaps in mystical experience and sometimes as the result of theological enquiry, that the holiness of God transcends the measures of man's mind. For man at least the holiness of God is infinite, man can set no bounds thereto; so far as the divine holiness has boundaries or limits they arise from within, from the essential nature of God himself. Therefore, when the righteous adore the holiness of God they are sometimes aware that, though it is indeed possible that they should grow considerably in knowledge of that holiness, it is impossible that they should ever completely comprehend it. Such awareness of the transcendent quality of the divine holiness is a powerful stimulus both to continuity and to depth of worship.

We have spoken of growth in knowledge of the divine holiness, and it is important to notice the main principles of such growth in relation to the worshipful quality of God's holiness. To a considerable extent growth in knowledge of the divine holiness consists in growth in the power to apprehend that holiness concretely. It is possible to know God's holiness formally, and it is possible also to know it concretely and materially. Probably we cannot know the divine holiness absolutely formally, that is without the slightest apprehension of its concrete reality, but it is clear enough that we can know God's holiness so formally that it has almost no influence or bearing upon our lives. Growth in holiness consists partly in seeking to make ever more real to ourselves such concrete apprehension of that holiness as we have already attained, and partly in endeavouring to

perceive that holiness manifest in an ever-widening range of concrete actuality. Because we are beings who can form and use abstract ideas, we can be helped to worship by conceptions of holiness that are in part abstract, but no abstract conception of the divine holiness can ever be as evocative of worship as the perception of that holiness in its actual being and concrete manifestations. They who would grow in knowledge of the divine holiness are most successful in attaining their desire when they seek such knowledge, not by any process of abstraction, but in the rich reality of a fervent spiritual life.

The righteous have, therefore, a two-fold task, the establishing of the divine holiness in themselves and the discerning of that holiness in their environment. We may take these two points in order. The first involves the application to the individual life of all that garnered spiritual wisdom that is latent in popular devotional practice and more consciously explicit in the treatises of the ascetic theologians. The power to perceive holiness is a power that can be increased by cultivation, and the saints of every age have spoken or written of the methods of cultivating that power which they themselves found most profitable. Moreover, and here we pass to our second point, the power to perceive the divine holiness is a power that grows by being exercised. Those who look for manifestations of the divine holiness discern them; those who do not look for them do not find them. If we are to perceive the divine holiness in our environment we must be on the look-out for it, just as we must be on the look out if we are to find gold or a four-leaved clover.

It is doubtful if there is as much force as is sometimes supposed in the type of criticism which would urge that we generally find what we expect to find. Such a criticism overlooks two facts, (*a*) that we do not find what we expect to find unless it is there to be found, and (*b*) that we do not always find what we expect to find. It is true that we shall not find the divine holiness manifest in our environment unless we look for it, or unless at the very least we are prepared to acknowledge its presence when it thrusts itself upon us; but it is also true that we cannot find the divine holiness at all, unless it is already in our environment

awaiting discovery. We may, indeed, at times imagine we have discovered manifestations of the divine holiness when we have done nothing of the kind, just as the prospector for gold may at times mistake quartz which does not contain gold for quartz that does, or as the somewhat superstitious seeker for four-leaved clovers may for a moment mistake a three-leaved clover for the object of his search. But precisely as the prospector can test whether he has discovered gold, or the seeker for four-leaved clovers can make sure whether he has been successful in his search, by criteria quite other than the fact of seeking ; so also he who seeks to perceive God's holiness in his environment has other and better means of deciding whether he has found it than the fact that he has sought it. It is curious that this point should be so constantly ignored by those who are anxious to show that the truths of religion are little more than unreal objectifications of subjective phenomena.

In seeking manifestations of God's holiness in their environment the righteous will be careful not to make their field of search unduly narrow. It may, perhaps, be a little fanciful to find evidence of God's holiness in the cold light of stars tremendously remote or in the ever-virgin snows of untrodden mountain tops, but at least it is well always to remember that the divine holiness is something more than simply ethical. It is, indeed, ethical and profoundly so, and therefore we shall with perfect propriety seek for its most striking manifestations amongst those of the human race who have been, or are, most conspicuous examples of moral rectitude. Yet holiness, even in man, and still more in God, is something more than moral rectitude. Holiness is a quality of life which includes but transcends the moral, and they who are holy differ from those who are not by something more than the difference between virtue and vice. This fact, indeed, is obscured on earth, because here none is perfectly holy and none completely evil ; but when we consider the most holy lives that history has known, we can see that supremely holy men and women have in their lives a quality of being that at times makes them seem curiously remote from their fellow men whom they alternately fascinate and repel.

This power of holiness to create a sense of otherness is only partially evident in man, but in God it is completely manifest. When, therefore, we seek in our environment for manifestations of the holiness of God we err if we seek them only in the region of the ethical. There are features of the divine holiness which cannot be revealed by any moral medium, just because they are not themselves ethical in fundamental quality ; possibly they are not even ethical at all. Here, as in other respects, men will differ, and we shall not all be equal in our power of apprehending these, at least partially non-ethical, elements of the divine holiness. Nor for those who have power to apprehend them through their manifestation in this world of time and space will identity of medium produce identity of message. There may be many voices in his environment that can speak to man of the non-ethical elements in the holiness of God, but no one will hear all those voices and some may hear none. He will be fortunate who hears at least two or three and who learns something of that wondrous otherness, that non-humanity of God, which is in part kept safe by the conception of the divine holiness, perhaps when he looks upon the waters of the boundless sea, or at the far-flung vault of heaven, or hearkens to the winds that go about the earth blowing where they list. No man knows which voices may speak to his brother of the holiness of God ; he can but tell him of the voices that he himself hears, and add that he believes that there are many other voices that can be heard by those who have ears to hear.

Yet, though the righteous are careful not to make unduly narrow the field wherein they search for manifestations of the divine holiness, there is another direction in which it will be their wisdom to exercise care. The righteous will be diligent in remembering that, though many things can be manifestations of the divine holiness and reveal now one and now another aspect of its nature, yet none of these things separately, nor all of them conjointly, can do more than hint at the wondrous glory of the divine holiness, as it abides in fullness of perfection within the being of the eternal Trinity. It is right to seek for every manifestation of the divine holiness that we have power to seek or find, for only so can

we give concreteness to our sense of the divine holiness ; but we err if we rest in the manifestations instead of passing onward by their aid to that which they but partially manifest. It is the combination of the observed manifestations of the divine holiness with the mentally recognised, but not actually observed or concretely known, infinite perfection of that holiness that bows man in utter wholehearted adoration of a God whose holiness he counts it a glory both to worship and to imitate.

We have, however, next to notice an interesting duality in the attitude of the righteous towards the divine holiness. On the one hand, as we have seen, the fact that the divine holiness eternally exists in its infinite perfection and is not the hard-won prize of toil and striving is a fact intensely evocative of worship. Man contemplates the static perfection of deity and as he contemplates adores. But, on the other hand, as we have now to note, if the static perfection of the divine is to evoke man's worship it must have in it also something of a dynamic quality. Men do not worship a holiness that is not missionary-hearted. A perfect holiness, we feel, could never be indifferent to the presence anywhere of the unholy. It is of the essence of holiness that it must seek to make holy ; it can never shut its eyes to the existence of that which might have, but is in fact without, its own quality of holiness. We need, therefore, to observe that, when we speak of the divine holiness as static, this is not to be taken to imply that that holiness is in a state of interior rest such that no power goes forth from it. A holiness of that character could not be worshipped by the righteous, for it would be less worthy of respect than their own hesitant, imperfect holiness. The righteous are well aware that in proportion as they are holy they consciously and unconsciously radiate holiness, and they know that all true holiness is of that character. When, therefore, they bow in adoration before the divine holiness they are fully conscious not only that the divine holiness is perfect and complete and is therefore in that sense static, but also they are well aware that perfect holiness never ceases to put forth all the power that is proper to its nature in the effort to overcome all that is unholy. In this sense perfect holiness is dynamic, for it

makes every possible effort to impart holiness to all that can receive it.

It is worth enquiring how far the worshipful quality of perfect holiness depends upon its capacity actually to impart itself to the non-holy or to the unholy, and how far upon the completeness of its efforts at self-impartation. In the first place, the fact that men have long worshipped and still worship God in his holiness creates a strong presumption that the existence of that which is unholy or only partially holy is at least not an absolute barrier to worship. After all the righteous who have worshipped in the past, and who worship to-day, have not been and are not ignorant of the existence of sin both in others and in themselves. Yet neither in theory nor in practice have they found it impossible to worship a God whose perfect holiness had not yet succeeded in imparting itself completely to all that might conceivably receive it.

None the less we must not shut our eyes to the fact that the existence of that which is not holy has often been a serious obstacle to faith. It is true that men have worshipped God in his holiness; it is also true that they have often abstained from worshipping because they have felt that the presence in the universe of that which is definitely not holy, or at least only partially holy, is conclusive against the existence of a perfectly holy God. It is worth noting that this hindrance to faith is operative in the spheres both of theory and practice. There are those who either cease to worship, or for whom worship becomes much more difficult, because of their first-hand experience in their own lives and in their immediate environment of the power of unholiness and sin. They could not, or at least do not, formulate a careful theoretical presentation of the difficulties they feel, but their difficulties are practical realities and have practical results in conduct. There are also those who are able to formulate generally the obstacles to faith and to Christian living presented by the fact that holiness is by no means dominant in the world as we know it. These men, in addition to the stress and strain of actual contact with the unholy in their immediate experience, bear the added burden that comes from being able to universalise their experience

and to realise that their individual difficulties and problems are but local manifestations of a lack of holiness which is world-wide in its range.

It is important to understand that our concern at this point in our enquiry is really with the whole Christian scheme of salvation. For Christian soteriology may be briefly described as God's method of dealing with unholiness; and it is of the heart of the Christian message that God is active against all that is sinful and evil and unholy. There is no occasion for us to attempt to describe in detail the Christian doctrine of salvation, but we should note that salvation can constantly be expressed in terms of deliverance from that which is unholy. The preparation for the Incarnation, the Incarnation itself, the Atonement, the founding of the Church, the work of the Holy Spirit within the Church and outside it, are all divine activities which may with perfect accuracy be described as efforts to establish the reign of holiness.

It is not, of course, to be supposed that there is nothing difficult to comprehend or to practise in the Christian scheme of salvation. There are difficulties of both kinds, theoretical and practical. But two things are significant. First, that no difficulty in either sphere is decisive against the Christian interpretation of the universe, and secondly, that the theoretical difficulties are more severe than the practical. Experience has shown that on the practical side Christianity is adequate to every combination of circumstances with which life can present it. In joy and sorrow, in fear and hope, in youth and age, in health and sickness, in victory and in defeat, Christianity has proved able to meet completely the needs of all who have accepted it whole-heartedly and practised its precepts with diligence and care. But we need not deny, for it cannot be denied, that there are in the Christian scheme of salvation speculative and theoretical difficulties which, if they are not insoluble, at least are not yet solved. We may instance, as examples of such difficulties, the relation of grace to free-will, or the relation of God's activity in time and space to his unmoved perfection abiding in eternity. But however heavily these difficulties may press upon those comparatively few minds that have an aptitude

for theological speculation, they are not matters of serious concern to the average Christian ; nor are they even of tremendous moment to the theologian in his living as distinct from his thinking.

We must be careful, of course, not to create an unreal divorce between thought and life. It is not to be suggested that theologians can, or should, effect a drastic separation between their living and their thinking. Just in proportion as a man is a clear thinker and his life a unity, such a separation is impossible, and it is certain that Christianity has never demanded it. There have indeed been individual obscurantists in Christianity, and even periods when obscurantism has been in the ascendant and rational activity at a low ebb ; but such individuals and periods are not of the essence of Christianity and Christianity has always in the end disowned them. It is the duty of the Christian theologian not to support or encourage any divorce between thinking and living, but, on the contrary, to do what is in his power to effect their closer union. Should he, for instance, in his speculations and theoretical enquiries seem to discover an argument or arguments decisive against some common Christian belief or practice, it is his duty to bring it forward in order that, if it be not refuted, its truth may make Christianity an even more adequate way of life than it was before. Those who accept the Christian way of salvation do so on two grounds. First because of its practical efficiency ; in the best sense it works in the face of life's incessant and immensely varied demands : and secondly, because, though there are some theoretical difficulties when it is viewed speculatively, no argument has yet emerged to prove the Christian way of salvation erroneous or false. Did such an argument appear, it would be the duty of all, to whom Christianity has taught its own love of truth, whole-heartedly to accept it.

Christianity, then, is not only a way of life, but it is also a way of life which no speculative enquiry or theoretical exposition has been adequate to overthrow. Christians of whatever school of thought recognise that the initiative in the provision of this way of life came from God. God was the builder of the highway of salvation ; it was God who

made the way of life and then said to men, ' This is the way, walk ye in it.' The existence of the way is the demonstration of the divine holiness. It is because God is holy that we possess a way of life which is also a way of salvation. For us, being as we are, no way could be a way of life which was not also a way of salvation, a way of rescue, a way of deliverance from all that is sinful and impure and unholy. As we walk upon the way of life we shall remember its cost to its builder. That it might be strong and sure a Son served as its foundation-sacrifice, and its stones are cemented with blood. Those who walk upon the way of life know that God is holy, the very ground beneath their feet proves it, and they gladly and thankfully offer him the grateful tribute of their worship. Yet even those whose hearts are set upon righteousness and who walk with happy feet along the way of life, though they know with passionate conviction that God is holy, do not entirely understand all the workings of his holiness. It is, for instance, not clear to them why for long ages God has been content that millions should live and die with little or no real understanding of the nature of the infinite God ; or how it can be consistent with God's perfect holiness that countless souls should live in foulness and impurity and sin, unconscious all too often of their state or of any need of saviour or salvation, quite blind alike to the glory of God's holiness and to the degradation of their own humanity. These things are not completely understood by the righteous ; in part they are not understood at all. But in a measure they become intelligible from the experience that has been the lot of the righteous themselves. They have learned that only as they have been true to the light vouchsafed them has fresh light been granted ; that only when they have tried to live up to the standards of holiness which they could already see has grace come to them and enabled them to see standards higher and nobler still. Also the righteous know that when they have turned aside from the way of life, such turning aside has been their own fault ; it may often have been difficult, but it was never impossible to continue walking steadfastly on the way of salvation ; when they turned aside their own self-will and pride turned their steps astray. Also the righteous remember with shame

that if there are still many who know little or nothing of the glory of God's holiness it is at least in part the fault of the righteous themselves. Their own sinfulness and selfishness have prevented them from revealing the holiness of God to their fellows. God has not had free course in them, and so his perfect holiness has only been very imperfectly shown through them to other men ; and other men, seeing it thus imperfectly, have felt no longing to worship and adore.

The righteous, then, in part understand, in the light of their own growth, and failure to grow, in holiness, why the holiness of God is not yet sovereign in the earth ; and, though there is still a good deal that they do not comprehend, their lack of knowledge is not sufficient to paralyse their faith. They realise that, if their own holiness had been, within the limits of its humanity, as active, as evangelistic, as missionary-hearted as the holiness of God, much that now defiles the earth would not be found in it, and that where are now heard the cries of covetousness and lust would be heard instead the voices of holy worshippers adoring the holiness of God. For the righteous at least, the vital fact is not so much the capacity of the divine holiness actually to impart itself to the non-holy as the completeness of its efforts at self-impartation. Satisfied on the latter point the righteous are content to worship in glad adoration, content to believe that the incomplete sovereignty of the divine holiness is in part due to man's misuse of his free-will, showing itself in disregard of the call to holiness, and in part due to causes which are at present outside man's comprehension and which perhaps will always remain so. It is, of course, understood that amongst these unknown causes there is nothing that would imply any failure or defect in the perfection of the divine holiness.

To complete our examination of the worshipful quality of the divine holiness we have now to note its effect upon the saints. The righteous we defined as those who, with various slips and failures, were quite definitely seeking to tread the upward path and consciously aiming at goodness and holiness : the saints may be defined as those who have already gone a considerable distance upon that path, and who have

attained to a marked degree of goodness and holiness of life. We note, in the first place, that the divine holiness is more fully comprehended by the saints than it is by other men. Because of their own definite sanctity of life the saints have a real knowledge of holiness from within. To them holiness is not primarily a subject for study or discussion, something to be quietly inspected and examined from without ; holiness is an inward experience, something that is lived and that is known from within.

Further, because the saints have travelled a considerable distance upon the upward path, their holiness has about it a settled and established quality which is much less apparent in the holiness of those who have advanced less far upon the road. The saints, therefore, are peculiarly fitted both to understand and to feel the charm of the effortless quality of the divine holiness. For those who have attained less far there seems positive virtue in striving and struggling for holiness, and perhaps in their case there is ; but the saints, from their higher view-point, know the greater worth of a holiness that is stable and sure, and which has become part of the very nature of him whose holiness it is. In part, holiness is already natural to the saints, it is their consuming desire to make it completely so. They therefore, more than all the rest of men, understand the God whose nature it is to be completely and perfectly holy. He is already what they hope to be ; in part they are akin to him abiding in a settled holiness, but for them there is still much to be accomplished before holiness becomes part of the very fabric of all their being. Yet that which they hope in future years in some degree to win by prayerful striving, and in some degree to receive as a free gift of the divine grace, has been God's possession, not merely through all the past but in eternity. God eternally is what they in a little measure are and hope still more to become, holy with a perfect holiness, a holiness that is no extra added from without, but which is part and parcel of the nature of him whose holiness it is.

Moreover, the saints remember the infinite range of the divine holiness. The holiness of man at its perfection is but a limited, finite holiness, the holiness appropriate to a finite, created being. But the holiness of God is the holiness

of infinite being, the sanctity of absolute love, and to this holiness there are no bounds or limitations, its perfection is unbounded and its range infinite. It is easy to understand the response of the saints to holiness such as this. It fills them with awe and fascination, with wonder and with love, with gratitude that in their weak humanity they should be allowed to contemplate God's holiness, and with zeal to become themselves more ready to receive it. Men in whose hearts emotions such as these bear sway act always in one way, by the constitution of their humanity no other course lies open, they bow their heads and offer adoration.

If now we pass beyond the range of our humanity and turn to consider the worshipful quality of the divine holiness in relation to orders of beings that are spiritually perfect, it is clear that our enquiry must become more difficult because of our lack of familiarity with beings of this type. Yet in view both of the Christian tradition of the existence of angels and of other similar non-Christian traditions, it seems right to give some consideration to the matter. It certainly cannot be disputed that, at least so far as the Christian tradition is concerned, the primary task of the angels is worship. We observe that they have no difficulty in discharging this task. Unlike ourselves they are not beings of divided nature, but are in perpetual inner harmony and concord. They are never a prey to conflicting emotions or desires ; that which they do they do with their whole being. Theirs is not so much a unified nature as a nature that is a unit. Their nature has not become one or been made one after a period of disunion ; it just is one. And the nature of these perfect spiritual beings is to worship.

It is perhaps not very profitable to enquire whether this worship is offered in time or in eternity or in some mode of existence that is neither temporal nor eternal. For we hardly possess the data necessary to bring such an enquiry to a successful conclusion. We simply do not know and have no means of accurately determining the mode of being appropriate to angels and to similar spiritually perfect beings. But if we at least are to picture their activities at all, we are obliged to picture them as in time ; the limitations of our humanity hardly allow us really to grasp, for instance,

the idea of non-temporal worship, though verbally we can construct the concept and can have mentally a very dim notion of its meaning.

When the angels worship, the object of their worship is, of course, God ; but it is clear that their conception of the divine being must differ in some respects from our own. If we think, for instance, of that element in the divine nature with which we are at present especially concerned, the divine holiness, we can see that the angels must view God's holiness from an angle rather different from our own. The fact that the angels are an order of spiritually perfect beings, and as such intrinsically sinless, must mean that they are in no way concerned with the relation of the divine holiness to sin. Thus they have no fear of the divine holiness ; it would not occur to them, as it occurs to us, to think of it as the divine reaction against sin ; nor would it occur to them to think of the divine holiness, as we sometimes think of it, as that quality of the divine nature which leads God to seek to save men from sin. The angels have no need of a redeemer or saviour, for they ever perfectly are that which they ought to be.

Yet it is probable enough that when the angels contemplate the divine holiness they are stirred to a fervour of response such as we never know, even though that holiness has for us in certain ways an appeal such as it can never have for the spiritually perfect angels. For though in our sinfulness we can adore God as our one hope of redemption, we can never look upon his holiness with the clear, untroubled eyes of the spiritually perfect, and therefore we can never see as they see the complete beauty of its perfect purity, nor feel as they feel the call to worship and adore. Yet the worship of the angels is throughout a creaturely worship. It is perfect of its kind, but it is in no sense the tribute of an equal to an equal. Whatever orders there may be of perfect spiritual beings, they are all on an equality with man in that they are created, not self-existent. God alone exists by his own power and in his own right ; the highest of the archangels of heaven and the lowest of all the things of earth are more akin to one another in the order of their being than is the noblest rank of all the spiritual hosts to

the divine Creator who gave to them their existence and their life. It is, therefore, not unreasonable to urge that as man grows in purity and holiness so will his worship increasingly resemble the glad homage that angelic beings for ever render round the throne of God. We need not suppose that angelic and human worship will ever precisely coincide. Even when, ransomed and redeemed, man is granted a place near the feet of God, his worship will bear upon it the marks of the history of him whose worship it is and will tell, as no angelic worship could ever tell, of sin forgiven and man restored, of a divine Redeemer and a saving Cross ; and perhaps because its song will thus tell of a holiness only slowly gained by the toil of man and the grace of God, yet at the last both won and given and for ever sure, the melody of that song also may re-echo round the Throne and find acceptance in the ears of the all-holy God.

II

THE INCARNATION

NEARLY nineteen and a half centuries ago a baby boy was born in Palestine of humble parentage. He was given the name of Jesus and was brought up at Nazareth, receiving, as far as we know, the education and training customary at that time for boys of his station. The spare time of his boyhood and the full time of his early manhood seem to have been largely spent in helping his father,¹ Joseph, in his work as a carpenter. The first thirty years of the life of Jesus were spent in this way and then he embarked upon a public career of preaching and teaching. His words and deeds at times aroused great enthusiasm, and many were on occasion ready to follow him and do his bidding ; but after a comparatively short ministry the work of Jesus of Nazareth aroused the bitter hostility of the religious leaders of Israel and they were successful in securing his death at the hands of their Roman overlords.

There can be no question that in the years of his public ministry Jesus proved himself an outstanding personality. His teaching thrilled the hearts of many by its moral loftiness ; and the marvellous deeds which at times accompanied it, however they may be explained, at least show his capacity to arouse and stir men's wonder and amazement. He was a man of power, and his life proved that his words were no mere idle talk, but were the outward expression of an inward greatness of soul. Though our evidence for the supposition is of the slightest, consisting simply of a single incident that occurred when Jesus was twelve years old, it is reasonable to suppose that in the years before his public ministry began there was evidence of the greatness of Jesus. That evidence need not have reached far beyond his home-town of Nazareth, but we cannot but believe that one, who was

¹ There is New Testament authority for the word, and I use it without prejudice to the question of the Virgin Birth.

to show such marvellous capacity for teaching and leadership when his public ministry began, had impressed his immediate circle with his personality and power long before he was thirty years of age.

Though we do not know the ways in which the greatness of Jesus showed itself before his public ministry began it is natural to suppose that they were akin to the ways in which he impressed men when he had begun to address himself to a larger circle. There would be an integrity of character, a power of moral discernment, a sureness in dealing with men and women, a spiritual fellowship with God, all of which would seem bewildering and marvellous to those whose allegiance was divided and who hesitated at times between their loyalty to Jehovah and their love of the things of the world. It is probable enough that long before he was thirty Jesus had often filled those who knew him with a sense of reverence and awe. It is clear enough that in his later life he often had this effect upon those who came in contact with him ; and it is reasonable to believe that in his earlier days at Nazareth his perfect purity, his unsullied love for truth and goodness, his complete regard for the personalities of those whom he encountered, and not least the fresh, frank naturalness of his fellowship with God, must often have powerfully affected many and filled with an awed wonder those whose daily contact with him made them more familiar than other folk with his character and life.

Yet it is unthinkable that our records would read as now they read if during these early years there had been anything approaching a cult of Jesus. We cannot suppose that there would be that quiet narrative in the Gospels of Jesus almost gliding into his public ministry with no great fuss or commotion if there were already those who counted him divine ; nor indeed is it imaginable that there should be that tremendous blank in the story if in his early manhood or even in his boyhood there were those who accounted Jesus worthy of divine honours. Even if we stress to the utmost the stories that the first Gospel tells of homage and adoration offered to the infant Jesus, we cannot deny that we hear no more of worship and that the attitude, taken towards Jesus by his mother when he was twelve years old and described for us

by St. Luke, in no way suggests that she or others offered him worship. It is important to emphasise that, if we except his earliest infancy, there is not the slightest evidence that anyone worshipped Jesus in all those years about which the narratives are so silent. The argument from silence, it is true, is often precarious, but a little thought will show that in this case it is extremely strong.

The Jews at the time of the birth of Jesus were convinced and fervent, some would say fanatical, monotheists. They were perfectly well aware of the difference between a creator and that which he creates, and were in no danger of confounding the works of God with God himself. They had a horror of idolatry in any shape or form ; the worship of kings and monarchs and other exalted personages was loathsome in their eyes ; many of their forefathers had died, and many of them would be prepared to die, rather than offer it. The Greek or the Roman or the pagan generally might be indefinite in distinguishing between the human and the divine when they worshipped ; and the Jews knew the cause of their indefiniteness. It was because they had many gods and knew not the one true God of all the world. Had they known him in his glory and his grandeur and his might they would never have supposed that the human could be on an equality with the divine ; but such a mistake was easy for those whose gods were but little removed from men and lacked the omnipotence and moral grandeur of Jehovah. If during his life as a young man at Nazareth there had been those who worshipped Jesus, the fact could not have been hidden for two reasons. In the first place the revolution in his whole spiritual outlook, that would have taken place in any Jew who had come to feel it right to offer the worship, that was God's exclusive prerogative, to a living man, would have been so terrific that no Jew could have kept it to himself. At the very least he would have had to have spoken about it, tried to discover if others felt as he did, taken note of their reactions to the words and deeds of the object of his worship. Far more probably he would have proclaimed, with a zeal that only death could still, the wonder of the discovery, the marvel that here was God upon earth, and have demanded that his fellows should

recognise this new stupendous fact and reconcile it with their race's ancient creed. To argue thus is in no way fanciful, for we know that it was precisely on these lines that typical Jews acted when in due course they became convinced of the divinity of Jesus.

In the second place, if Jesus had been worshipped at Nazareth even by only a few the fact could not have been hidden because it would have convulsed the town. If but a single Jew had learned that one or some of his fellow-citizens were offering worship to one whom he himself accounted but a man, the horror of the discovery would at first have dazed him and then sent him at headlong speed to the local religious leaders. Their horror would be equal to, or greater than, his own. The modern idea, that a man's religion is his individual concern and is to be left alone by others so far as may be, would never have crossed their minds. They would have felt that guilt of the most awful kind was being brought upon their town and race by the flagrant idolatry of one or more of their fellow-citizens, and they would not have rested until they had cut out, if need be by the most drastic surgery, this deadly malignant growth which, unless speedily excised, would bring upon them the consuming wrath of Jehovah.

It is a commonplace of Christian commentators and theologians to point out that when God's Son came to earth the Jewish race was the one most fitted to receive him. This contention has a long history, going back indeed to the New Testament itself, and it is customary to justify it mainly by insisting upon the superiority of the Jewish idea of God to contemporary notions of the divine. Thus Jewish monotheism is emphasised as opposed to the polytheism so prevalent in popular paganism, though often rejected in the more cultured and philosophic circles. We are, too, reminded of the ethical excellence of Jehovah and of his moral purity, so vastly superior to the comparatively low moral standards of many contemporary deities. These points, though hackneyed, are definitely important and cannot be disregarded; but there is a further and less familiar point that may be made in this connection. It might be urged by a Christian theist that one of the chief reasons why the

Jewish race was pre-eminently fitted to have God's Son born amongst them was the adequacy of their realisation of the difference between God and man. No Jew was ever likely to confound the human with the divine ; no Jew, therefore, was ever likely to worship the human as divine. Amongst pagan peoples worship might be given too readily to the merely human and the non-divine ; amongst the Jews there had to be conclusive proof of deity before there could be any offering of that worship which is the exclusive prerogative of the divine. If God's Son had been born a Roman or a Greek his fellow-countrymen might have worshipped him for reasons other than his deity ; but, born a Jew, there must be most sure proof of deity before respect and reverence and awe can, by a most fundamental and decisive change, pass over into worship.

We have seen already that what was thus *a priori* probable did in fact occur during the first thirty years of the earthly life of the Son of God. Men withheld their worship from him because they had no conviction of his deity. Pagans might conceivably have worshipped a marvellous young man ; no Jew did or would. When we pass on to the public ministry of Jesus we meet with certain difficulties. It would, for instance, be idle to pretend that the last word has been written on the problem of the documents viewed simply as literature, still less has it been written on their interpretation. Fortunately it is not necessary for our purpose to consider the evidence in detail, indeed to do so would destroy the proportions of this study, and we may be content with a broad outline which would command a considerable amount of critical support. In the present condition of enquiry into the four Gospels, it will be well to rely mainly upon the Synoptic tradition.

When Jesus, at the age of thirty, went forth to teach and preach amongst his fellow-countrymen, it is clear that they reacted to him in a variety of ways. Our concern is simply with those who took the most favourable view of his life and work. His effect upon these was startling, though not more so at first than effects secured by other great leaders. Men were ready to leave all and follow him ; they were prepared to allow him to be the dominant force in their lives, to accept

his principles as their principles, to carry out his will and do his bidding. What they thought him will probably never be known with absolute certainty, and the main reason for that fact is that often they did not know themselves. Most, though not all, of our Lord's closest followers were men of action rather than men of thought, not much given to introspection or self-analysis, and not too apt at analysing the personalities of others. But, like other men of action, once they found a leader they were not often at a loss ; and when they were, it was generally because they had started to reflect. Most of our Lord's closest followers might not know what to think when they were in his company, but they generally knew what to do.

It is important to emphasise from the point of view of Christian theism how dangerous it is to be over-definite in trying to define the attitude to Jesus of his closest followers, and in particular of his Apostles. Here were men who, if Christian theism is right, were men facing a situation literally unique in human history. They were the intimate disciples of one who was the God-Man in a sense in which no one else had ever been or could be. The goodness of their leader humbled them ; his steadfastness of purpose made them ashamed of their own indecisiveness and frequent futility ; his sense of communion with the Father brought home to them the weak infirmity of their own faith. He challenged them to be true to the highest ideals, and never by word or deed hinted that he himself was other than true to the standards he proclaimed. Egotistical leaders have in all ages found followers, but they have not been followers of the moral quality of the Apostles, nor have they followed from motives similar to those of the Apostles. The sublime assumption of Jesus that he was true to the noblest standards would have cost him the best of his followers but for one thing, the fact that, so far as they who were ever in his company and in closest fellowship with him could discern, Jesus was thus true to the best. He was quite frank with his chosen followers ; he did not pretend that his was an effortless goodness ; he told them that he was tempted, and at least on one occasion gave them an indication of some of the types of temptation to which he was exposed ; but

he never suggested that he yielded to temptation and they never observed that he did.

Jesus, the greatest leader of all history, held his followers in part because there was about him neither false arrogance nor false humility. He faced men with the challenge of the sheerly real, and the realists amongst them acknowledged the justice of his claim. He claimed nothing that was not his, and so men gave him what he claimed. Profoundly conscious of sin in others he had no consciousness of sin in himself, and those who knew him best acknowledged that there was no reason why he should. He did not proclaim his sinlessness, but he certainly made no attempt to deny or hide it, and it stood out in his life for all who had eyes to see ; and his calm assumption that he was, in fact, sinless brought men to him, because they felt that here was no arrogance or vanity, but only reality and loyalty to truth. On the other hand, Jesus knew his limitations. He spoke of the day and the hour of which no man, not even the Son, had knowledge ; he reminded a perhaps rather fussy and pretentious enquirer that none is good save God, and, though the incident can be interpreted in more than one way, it is at least in full accord with the spirit of Jesus to take his statement as a quiet and reverent acknowledgement that all human goodness is at best but secondary and in no way comparable with the underived goodness of God. Moreover, if we may accept the Johannine tradition in a matter in which even the most advanced critics would acknowledge the probability of its correctness, we have on one occasion Jesus stating that his Father is 'greater than all,' and on another with even more explicitness, 'the Father is greater than I.'

Further, apart from these definite acknowledgements of limitation, there are plenty of indications in the Gospels that Jesus was limited in a variety of ways, and that in many respects his life was in accordance with our human finiteness. Thus he increased in wisdom and stature, mentally and physically obeying the laws of human growth, and in each case passing from the less to the more in mind as well as in body, becoming wiser as well as becoming taller. But they who become wiser have at least known a stage in which not all wisdom was theirs. He ate and drank, became tired and

weary, slept, shed tears, groaned and sighed, showing himself in these matters quite similar to his followers. He displayed no startling scientific or economic knowledge, no outstanding familiarity with history or literature, and was not apparently particularly interested in politics. It is true, indeed, that he enunciated fundamental principles that would ensure basic correctness for scientist, economist, historian, writer, or statesman ; but the principles are in broadest outline and the applications to life comparatively seldom worked out. When at length the Jews seized him and the Romans scourged and crucified him, his suffering and his death distressed his followers unspeakably, but there is no evidence to suggest that they thought them things impossible ; rather they must have been for them the culmination of long-anticipated fears and in harmony with the physical aspects of the life of Jesus as they had known it hitherto.

On the other hand, there were features in the life of Jesus that separated that life from normal experience ; aspects and powers that suggested that here was one who in some ways at least was other, or more, than human. There were the wondrous sinlessness, the purity, the fellowship with God, of which we have already spoken ; and there were also those strange healings and that apparent control of natural forces which were certainly things impossible for ordinary, average men. When the uttermost allowance has been made for exaggeration and misinterpretation, when we have reflected that some at least of the miracles of healing, though bewildering to those who experienced them and to those who saw them, might be readily intelligible to modern scientists, we are still left with a substantial residuum of unusual happenings which at least imply the activity of a strangely powerful and unusual personality. Nor must we overlook, as we consider the features that separate the life of Jesus from the lives of average men, his eschatological teaching and his Messianic claims. It is no doubt true that to describe the exact nature of the former or the precise extent of the latter is a task of considerable difficulty and one that has not yet been accomplished to universal satisfaction. None the less we cannot deny, without abandoning both

traditional Christianity and the limits of sober criticism, that Jesus claimed a knowledge of the future, and asserted both a present and future position for himself such as are not normally possessed or held by ordinary, average men.

It should be clearly understood that it is no part of our present purpose to assess the validity of those claims or to determine their precise extent. Our interest is to note the reaction of the immediate followers of Jesus to his claims before his earthly life closed on Calvary. Now we may note in the first place that, however much we stress the eschatological element in the teaching of Jesus, its presence there by no means necessarily implies the divinity of him who taught it. In this as in other respects Jesus stood in a line of succession and there were and had been many prophets and teachers whose utterances had a strongly eschatological quality. The Book of Daniel is, of course, a conspicuous example of this type of teaching and is a direct ancestor of the eschatological element in the teaching of Jesus. No Jewish hearer would suppose that when Jesus made sweeping and definite assertions about the future that he was thereby necessarily divine or even claiming to be divine. If the hearer believed that the prophecies of Jesus would be fulfilled, he would no doubt hold that this prophet of Nazareth was speaking in the name of the Lord and that the Lord was with him ; but he would no more suppose that the fullest acknowledgement of such a fact constrained him to offer worship to Jesus, than he would feel the slightest obligation to worship the prophet whom he doubtless believed to be the author of the Book of Daniel. Because we read the Gospels with Christian presuppositions we are apt, if we accept their eschatological teaching as genuinely reproducing the words, or at least the mind, of Jesus, to find in this comprehensive grasp and survey of the future sure evidence of deity. Such a conclusion, at least in any metaphysical sense, would never occur to those who listened to the teaching of Jesus during his life on earth. In proportion as they accepted his eschatology they would gladly acknowledge that God was with him to illuminate and inspire ; but the thought of offering him worship would never begin even to enter their minds ; worship would be

offered to the great Jehovah, and only to him, in gratitude for the words of wisdom that he had put it into the heart of his servant the prophet to utter for the good of his people.

When we turn to the Messianic claims of Jesus the situation is a little more difficult. It is, in the first place, complicated by the fact that Israel's Messianic hopes were not clear-cut or definite. They were differently conceived by different minds and their spirituality varied with the spirituality of those whose hopes they were. But if Israel's Messianic hopes in general were somewhat vague, still more uncertain was the figure of the Messiah around whom those hopes sometimes centred. Scholars are well aware of what is too often overlooked in popular New Testament exegesis, that the figure of the Messiah is by no means an invariable feature of Jewish Messianic expectation. Even when a Messiah is pictured as having some relation to the establishment of the Messianic age his position and functions are varyingly conceived, though normally if he is present at all his position is important and his functions distinguished. It is very possible that those scholars are correct who believe that Jesus at some stage in his life came to regard himself as the Messiah, but that he gave a new interpretation to the rôle by conceiving it in terms of the Isaianic Suffering Servant. Such a view accords well with the general character of Jesus and would be additional and weighty evidence of his outstanding religious genius. Fortunately it is not necessary for our purpose to determine the exact extent of Jesus' Messianic claims. Even if we press them to the uttermost limits that a reasonable scholarship could accept, we need not hesitate to conclude that neither Jesus himself nor the most eager of his followers supposed that to be the Messiah was also necessarily to be entitled to worship.

Professing Christians are sadly handicapped in their efforts to reach a right understanding in this matter. They believe that Jesus was God's Messiah, they believe also that Jesus was and is worthy of worship, and they conclude that the Messiah was and is worthy of worship. Historically the conclusion is correct ; the Messiah of history was and is worthy of worship. But we must emphasise that he was and is worthy of worship not because of his Messiahship,

but because he was and is himself. No Jew supposed that the Messiah, if and when he came, would be entitled to worship in the same sense that God was entitled to worship. To the Messiah would be given as of right the most profound honour, respect and reverence, to a degree far beyond anything that could be accorded to mortal man ; it would be recognised that the Messiah was indeed God's chosen and God's anointed, his very special instrument for the salvation of his people ; but also it would be remembered that only God was God and that, however great the dignity of the Messiah, however close his position to the right hand of God, yet always he was only a creature, even if the greatest of the creatures, and that therefore he could never legitimately either receive or claim the worship that was reserved only for the Most High. Only if it were thought that Jehovah himself had come in person to be the Saviour and Messiah of his people could the Jew bow himself in adoration before any Messianic figure, however great and glorious either in outward seeming or in inward sanctity of heart. But the idea of Jehovah coming in person, though it would have presented no difficulty to the Israelites in the days of the Judges, was an idea increasingly difficult of acceptance in the later days of Judaism, with its emphasis on the transcendence and absolute supremacy of God, and many would have held any such idea to be definitely derogatory to the honour and glory of Jehovah.

There is a further point that requires emphasis. Though we stress the Messianic claims of Jesus to the utmost, we have to remember that those claims were put forward by a Messiah who to all outward appearance at least was as human as any of those to whom he spoke. It is not easy for any, who know the subsequent history of the Christian Church, and who perhaps have recited the Christian creeds and tried to follow the Christian practice almost as long as they can remember, to think all these things away and to enter into the minds of those who walked and talked with Jesus in Palestine long ago. Thus, because we believe Jesus to be the Son of God, we unconsciously set his Messianic claims in a setting of supernatural dignity and exaltation quite other than that in which they were actually first made.

The Messianic claims of Jesus, however we define them, were made by one whom his followers knew to have been a carpenter, who had little wealth or social standing, whom they had often seen tired and weary, sometimes dropping into exhausted slumber on a steersman's cushion, a man sometimes dust-covered and travel-stained, a man, moreover, often opposed by those whose position or learning gave them eminence. In circumstances such as these his followers may have grasped the teaching of Jesus when he taught them that he was a Messiah who came to suffer and to serve, for, difficult though the lesson was, his life was ever before them as a practical illustration of the truth of what he said ; but when his claims were to dignity and power his followers must have been sorely puzzled, believing, indeed, that he was worthy, but seeing little prospect that this holy, unwordly, intensely lovable prophet from Nazareth would ever receive the pre-eminence which at times he seemed to think his due and which his followers at least would gladly have accorded him.

When we view the Messianic claims of Jesus in their historic setting, and remember not only the comparative obscurity of him who made them, but also the intensely monotheistic creed of those who heard them, it becomes almost ludicrous to suppose that those claims evoked the worship of his followers during the earthly life of Jesus. In part, no doubt, they did not understand them ; and in any case they would not have supposed that Jesus was claiming for himself anything more than that profound reverence and glad obedience which are obviously due at any time or place to the Lord's Anointed. Indeed, we may go further and open up a wide field of enquiry into the mystery of the Incarnation by considering whether Jesus himself did make, or could have made, any claim to worship during his earthly life. In view of the uncertainty as to the period in his life when Jesus developed a Messianic consciousness, and because of the difficulty of defining in detail the content of that consciousness, it will be prudent to conduct our investigation on fairly general lines.

It is clear enough to any student of his life that Jesus was steeped in the Old Testament scriptures. Their words were

often upon his lips, and they had doubtless often formed the subject of his meditations and influenced the course of his spiritual fellowship with the Father. To one thus familiar with the sacred writings of his people, the idea of a Messiah would be no novelty. Nor would it be merely a feature of the popular expectation; it would acquire a background in history and the dignity that comes with age. Jesus would know that his race had long looked for a redeemer; he would know also that false redeemers had from time to time appeared; and in his great love for his people he would doubtless long that God's Messiah might speedily show himself to Israel.

It is not impossible that Jesus began even in boyhood to have the first faint sense of a Messianic consciousness, and we may hazard a conjecture as to its cause. Amongst a people expecting a great deliverer it would be natural for the boys of the race to take a considerable interest in such an expectation. An ancient Oriental people, of course, assumed that the Messiah, if he were human at all, would be a male and, unless boyish nature has greatly changed, it would be natural enough for a Jewish boy to entertain occasionally a secret hope that perhaps he himself might one day prove to be the Messiah for whom so many in his race were looking; and it would be still more natural to suggest with but little seriousness and much mockery that some other boy, whose wits were perhaps a little dull and whose capacity for leadership did not exist, was perhaps the great deliverer long promised to Israel! All we are concerned to maintain is that it must have been a fairly common thought amongst Jewish boys in the time of our Lord that perhaps one of their number might prove to be the promised Messiah; and it is, for instance, possible that on some occasion when they were alone together the boy John the Baptist, awe-struck by the winning goodness and wondrous personality of the boy Jesus, may have ventured to express the thought and the hope that perhaps his friend and kinsman would one day prove to be the Anointed of Jehovah.

But however we suppose Jesus to have gained his Messianic consciousness, and whether it was mediated to him from

without or arose from within as he communed with God and meditated upon the sacred scriptures of his race, we are not justified in imagining that one who believed himself to be the Messiah would forthwith claim the worship of his fellows. We do not, for instance, read that the false Messiahs expected to be worshipped ; and though it may be precarious to argue from the false to the true, we can at least say that nothing in the education and upbringing of Jesus as a Jewish boy, and nothing in those Old Testament scriptures which he knew and loved, would lead him to suppose that the Messiah, as Messiah, was entitled to that worship which every Jew regarded as the exclusive prerogative of Jehovah. Nor do the Gospel narratives suggest that Jesus claimed worship. When we read them with the prepossessions of many centuries of Christianity in our minds, one of the things that most strikes us is the scantiness of the evidence suggesting that Jesus received worship during his life on earth. We find worship occasionally offered him by non-Jews ; but the evidence that he was worshipped by his own Jewish followers before his death is extremely slight ; and apparently, if such worship were offered at all, it was only after some spectacular triumph over the natural world, which for the moment shook the disciples from their customary practice of offering worship to Jehovah only. The whole course of the narratives makes it abundantly plain that normally Jesus neither claimed worship nor received it from his chosen followers. Even though he accounted himself the Messiah and they so accounted him, neither he nor they supposed that he was therefore entitled to receive men's worship.

We may continue our enquiry from a different angle. Jesus had been trained and brought up in a pious and devout home where Jehovah was faithfully worshipped and his commandments conscientiously obeyed. We know, from the one incident of his boyhood that is recorded, how eagerly the boy Jesus responded to the teaching and practice of his parents, and his zealous readiness to be in his Father's house and about his Father's business. The records tell of his manhood's intimacy with the Father ; of the rising up before the dawn that there might be opportunity of fellow-

ship with God before the rush and turmoil of the day ; of whole nights passed in prayer ; of words and deeds which were but the outward expression of an inward communion with the divine ; and, though we have only the one incident from the earlier years, the boy is father to the man and from what we know of the manhood we can argue to the goodness and holiness of the boyhood. Steeped in the monotheism of his race, Jesus, as boy and man, lived in loving, conscious dependence upon the Father. He wrought great works and he made great claims, but the works were done in reliance upon another's power, and the claims made because he was the servant of the Lord. It is unthinkable that one who had been reared and trained as Jesus had been reared and trained, and who lived and worked in the spirit in which Jesus lived and worked, should even for an instant claim the worship that belonged, and belonged only, to Jehovah. One who believes himself to be called by God to a position of supreme importance may make tremendous claims upon his fellows. In his Master's service he may claim to control their lives even unto death ; he may demand instant obedience and the utmost respect and honour ; and all these things men may give him and, by giving them, prove their loyalty to their God ; yet there is one thing that may neither be asked nor granted, and that is worship, for worship is God's alone. It is the glory of the Jewish race that they not only learned that lesson, but at the price of incredible suffering burned it into the consciousness of mankind ; and it is part of the glory of Jesus in his humanity that in the absolute perfection of his earthly life he remembered to give God the glory.

Remembering that our study moves within the limits of traditional Christian theism and therefore accepts the orthodox Christology, we may pursue our theme by supposing that that which we believe to be untrue did, in fact, occur, and that Jesus in his earthly life demanded worship for himself. It must, of course, be understood that here, as elsewhere in this study, we are using 'worship' in the full and proper sense of the word, not of mere respect and reverence, however great, but of that adoration and lowly homage which cannot fittingly be offered to any save to God. Now if we suppose

that Jesus claimed men's worship and remember his upbringing and training and the traditions of his race, it is clear that he must have thought of himself not simply as the servant or even as the Messiah of God, but as God himself. It is of course undeniable that there have been people who have thought of themselves as God ; such people exist to-day, confined in asylums and mental hospitals, but we do not regard them as possessing a normal human consciousness, nor do we find them endowed with unique powers of moral discernment or with a striking capacity for religious leadership. Yet Jesus was a great moral and religious leader, and it is orthodox to believe that he had a normal human consciousness. If Jesus thought of himself as God, we can at least say that he was most extraordinarily unlike all other people who have had a similar idea about themselves.

It may be well at this point to examine a little further an idea we have just used, the idea of a normal human consciousness. We may begin by noting the wide range of human consciousness. There is, for instance, the consciousness of the child, so profoundly different in a variety of ways from the consciousness of the aged. Or we may make the distinction one of culture and civilisation, and contrast the consciousness of a Melanesian savage with the consciousness of a citizen of London or New York. Or marked difference in vocation may be the cause of a marked difference in consciousness ; thus there would be considerable divergence between the consciousness of a typical sea-captain and the consciousness of a typical philosopher. Yet one cannot deny that each and all of these different kinds of consciousness are properly and normally human. In the face of this wide range of variety we might well despair of being able to define the normal human consciousness or to demarcate with accuracy its precise limits.

Fortunately it is not necessary for our purpose to make the attempt. All we are concerned to do is to point out that there is something that falls definitely outside the limits of normal human consciousness. That something is the belief that one ought to be worshipped. That belief is impossible for any normal human being, who belongs to a civilisation that has attained to a real belief in monotheism,

if he accepts the religion of his fellows. Certainly such a belief would have been abnormal and fantastic in any devout Jew of the time of Jesus. Jesus himself, as touching his humanity, would have been equally abnormal and fantastic if he had supposed himself to be God. If we accept, as we do accept, the orthodox Christology and insist upon a real human nature for the incarnate Logos, we cannot, without self-contradiction, suppose that the Jesus who was born and lived a devout Jew, whose fellowship with the Father was constant and sincere, who moved through life in strong reliance upon the power and love of Jehovah, was yet somehow able, amidst this lowly loving dependence upon the divine, to think of himself as God. If he did so think of himself then we must abandon the idea that he possessed a normal human consciousness, for it is certainly no part of the consciousness of a normal human being to suppose that he is God. Indeed, if anyone, to outward seeming a normal human being, began to claim for himself the worship due to God alone, his fellows might come to a great variety of divergent conclusions about him, but they would all be in absolute agreement that his humanity was not normal.

Nor is such a conclusion at all seriously affected by the fact that Jesus was perfect man. It is true that in one sense it is not normal for men to be perfect because all men save one have been definitely imperfect. But the imperfect is that which has diverged from the standard ; it is that which is not as it ought to be ; it has failed to be true to its archetype and has departed from the norm ; strictly it is the imperfect, not the perfect, that is abnormal. Moreover, even if we suppose ourselves or other men to attain to perfection we do not suppose that we at the same time become worthy of worship or in any way entitled to worship. No doubt if we were perfect we should be much better able to offer worship to God, but we should have no right to expect it to be offered to ourselves. Indeed, if we were perfect the very thought of receiving worship would horrify us. In our perfection we should see, with a clarity that is not now ours, the nature of God and the nature of man, and should recognise the infinite gulf that divides the divine from the human,

the Creator from the creature. Just as no one has worshipped God with the reverence and love, with the awe and purity, with which Jesus worshipped him; so, we may believe, no one has seen, with the absolute clearness with which Jesus saw, that no human being, though utterly and completely perfect, is for a moment worthy of the worship that belongs to the Father alone. It is the destiny of humanity to give and not to receive worship, to become not worshipful but, if it may be so, the perfect worshipper; and Jesus in this as in all else fulfilled his human destiny.

There is a passage in Hazlitt's essay, 'Of Persons One would wish to have seen,' which is, I think, illuminating in this connection. Hazlitt and some of his friends, including Charles Lamb, had been discussing famous personages of the past whom they would have liked to have met. Several individuals have been mentioned and the qualities that made them noteworthy enumerated and then the discussion proceeds as follows. "'There is only one other person I can ever think of after this,' continued Lamb; but without mentioning a name that once put on a semblance of mortality. 'If Shakespeare was to come into the room, we should all rise up to meet him; but if that person was to come into it, we should all fall down and try to kiss the hem of his garment!'"

In this passage from Hazlitt we may notice first of all the utter absence of any suggestion that the human is worthy of worship. Lamb, who evidently intends to mention the greatest or one of the greatest of all human beings, chooses, as was natural enough at a gathering of literary men, the name of Shakespeare, and he declares that if this supremely eminent poet entered the room the whole company would rise to greet him. We are clearly meant to understand that such rising on the part of men themselves distinguished in the literary world would be their way of showing respect and honour to a fellow-craftsman of genius superior to their own. But if Jesus entered the room the company, so Lamb contended, would fall down and try to kiss the hem of his garment. It is, however, most important to notice that this difference in behaviour is due to a profound difference in the way in which the two personalities, Shakespeare and

Jesus, are understood. Shakespeare is regarded as human, Jesus as divine. The latter fact can be clearly seen if we examine the form of Hazlitt's narrative. He speaks of 'a name that once put on a semblance of mortality.' Such a phrase manifestly implies the deity of Jesus which was apparently accepted by Hazlitt himself, at least in this essay. Moreover, the obvious implication is that Lamb also accepted it, for it would have been a bad literary blunder, such as an essayist of Hazlitt's competence would hardly have perpetrated, to strike this note if it did not accord with the views of the speaker. The company was ready to stand in the presence of Shakespeare and to kneel in the presence of Jesus, not because they accounted Jesus a greater man than Shakespeare, though doubtless they did, but because they accounted Jesus as something more and other than man, and their kneeling would be their homage to that something more and other, which, so they believed, was divine and as such to be worshipped.

It is to be noted that the fact that Jesus was more than man is one thing, and that attempts to explain the fact are something else. It is, for instance, possible to accept the fact and not be able to explain it. On the other hand, it is possible to deny the fact altogether and so obviate any need for explanations. But if one does thus deny the fact that Jesus was more than man, one ought frankly to recognise that there is no justification for his worship. If Hazlitt, Lamb, and their friends had supposed that Jesus was simply a very much greater man than Shakespeare, even if they had supposed that he was nothing more, they would have been willing and glad to spring quickly to their feet at his entry; they would have been neither glad nor willing to fall on their knees before him and try to kiss the hem of his garment. That act of homage is reserved for the presence of deity and for that alone. Regarded simply as man, there is nothing worshipful in Jesus; and only an utterly inadequate idea of God could ever make anyone suppose that there was. Those who lived with Jesus in his life on earth honoured and loved him as few men or none have been honoured and loved, but so long as they thought of him as man they never worshipped him. Worship came only after

the Resurrection and the Ascension and the outpouring of the Spirit of Jesus, for these wondrous events proved what his followers had begun to believe even in his life on earth, that Jesus was something more than man, something more even than the Messiah, that he was in some sense God himself.

The early Church was well aware that the fact, that Jesus was in some sense divine, was of the very essence of her faith. That fact had to be established in the face of opposition of two very different kinds. On the one hand there was the hostility of monotheistic Judaism, which found it almost insuperably hard to believe that one who had perished upon a cross was in truth their promised Messiah and yet more than that, God of God. On the other hand, there was the insidious, if largely unconscious, opposition offered to Christianity by those who were quite willing to give Jesus a place in some pantheon which already contained a considerable variety of gods and saviours. It was the task of the Church for some centuries after her founding so to define her faith as to safeguard the fact of the deity of Jesus, and to secure that fact against all minimising interpretations. It would indeed be a grave mistake to suppose that these essential results were secured chiefly in the debating room or the council hall. The first and most valuable safeguard of the deity of Jesus was the worship of Christians; of Christians high and low in social station, bright of intellect or dull of understanding, converted from Judaism or from this or that form of paganism, or brought up from birth in the Christian faith, but all alike worshipping the risen and ascended Jesus as God, and finding in that worship the glory of their manhood and the salvation of their souls.

It must be emphasised that Christian worship preceded Christian theology, and that men were worshipping the person of Christ before they sought to explain it. Religion is prior to theology, and worship to definition, though doubtless their development is often parallel, and also that, which is both logically and temporally posterior, in due course makes its own contribution to that which is logically and temporally prior. Nor need we deny that worship of any kind is never wholly irrational; there must always be some

faint understanding and rational perception of the object that is worshipped. The absolutely unintelligible has no worshippers, though the largely unintelligible may have many. But though worship may be prior to definition it cannot long continue amongst civilised and intelligent people without having to face the problem of defining the object of its worship. Certainly when Christianity made its impact alike upon a race so rich in religious genius as the Jewish, and upon civilisations that had felt the Roman genius for order and for form, and the Hellenic genius for speculative enquiry, it could only be expected that the exponents of this new religion would be required to give a coherent account of their faith and to set forth their creed in orderly array for the calm consideration of their fellows. The early Church recognised the legitimacy of the demand and set herself to formulate her faith, partly in response to enquiries from without and partly in response to needs and problems arising within the fold. Doubtless there were then, as in all ages of the Church, pious souls whose simple unreflective goodness deprecated these attempts at definition and felt no need of them ; but the more speculative, probing, questing type of mind, whether within the Church or without it, knew that such attempts were necessary and could not legitimately be avoided.

In due course the Church formulated her Christology and took her stand upon the doctrine of the two natures and the one person. Christ was perfect God and perfect Man, but he was not two persons but one person. The pre-existent Logos, the Mind or Reason of God which is both personal, in the Trinitarian sense, and divine, was held to have taken our nature upon him in its perfection and to have been born perfect man. How these things were possible or came to pass the Church was less concerned to explain; her primary aim was at all costs to safeguard the facts upon which she felt her very existence to depend. Now it is sufficiently clear that if Christ is both God and man it is not only legitimate, but our bounden duty to worship him. And when we worship him, we worship him as a person who is both God and man. Probably the ordinary, simple believer needs to know no more Christology than this, that

the Jesus who lived and taught in Palestine was the Son of God come down to seek and save mankind. That is a faith in which a man may be glad to live and content to die. It is sufficient for life's highway, be it rough or smooth, and in the strength of it millions have journeyed onward until travelling days were done.

But for those, whose blessing or curse it is that their minds, more speculatively inclined, are unable to rest in a faith so simple though so profound, further definition and more precise analysis are required. For us men and for our salvation the Son of God came down from heaven and became man. That fact is of course evocative of worship in the highest degree. It shows us the self-sacrificing love that is the very life of deity, and as we see that love we bow ourselves in adoration. The figure of Jesus in Palestine is a figure that brings men to their knees, because they know that Jesus is the pre-existent Logos content to be limited by our human nature that, in and through such limitation, the divine love may achieve the work of man's salvation. But the Jesus of Palestine is adorable not for his human nature, but for his divine nature. We worship him not because he is perfect man, but because he is God living as man, God incarnate. His human nature is not worshipful in itself ; no human nature ever was, or will be, worshipful ; but the human nature of Jesus is potent to inspire worship, because it is the measure of the self-emptying to which the love of God was ready to submit to bring salvation to the sinful children of men.

But though we can speak of the human nature of Jesus in isolation from his divine nature, and in isolation from his person, it will be wise always to remember that thus to speak is to speak abstractly. As a matter of history the human nature of Jesus had no existence in isolation from either his divine nature or his person. When the pre-existent Logos became man, he possessed manhood ; but the manhood did not exist before he possessed it. Similarly we can speak of the divine nature in isolation from the person whose divine nature it is ; and at times it may be convenient so to speak. But such speech is always abstract and also always dangerous unless we constantly remember that in reality there is

no such thing as a divine nature apart from a divine person. There is and always has been and ever will be the eternal Logos whose nature is divine and who therefore ever merits the worship of men. When in the temporal order the eternal Logos became man he did not in any degree become more worshipful than he was before ; but it became easier for men to worship him. Both these points will repay development.

In the first place, it is as impossible for God to become more worshipful as it is for him to become more holy, more righteous, or more loving. Just as God is perfect holiness, perfect righteousness, perfect love, so also is he, if the word may be pardoned, perfect worshipfulness. There are no degrees in the divine attributes and qualities. God is all that he is perfectly and completely ; no diminution of or addition to his attributes and qualities would be either possible or desirable. Supremely, completely, utterly, God is worshipful, worshipful now by us in the temporal order, worshipful by beings of such other orders as may have power to comprehend him. Moreover, the worshipful quality of deity is not increased because worship is offered, nor diminished because worship is withheld. God was infinitely worshipful when there were no created beings ; he will not be more worshipful if all creation is one day gathered in adoration at his feet. The worshipfulness of God is the necessary consequence of his deity ; it is because God is as he is that he is worshipful.

In the second place, however, though God is eternally worshipful, he cannot in actual fact be offered worship save by those who have some knowledge of his nature. God is infinitely worshipful whether men know him or not ; but most assuredly he is not worshipped unless they know him. And though the worshipfulness of God in no way varies with the revelations that he may choose to make of his divine being, man's capacity to worship him varies in precise proportion to the quality and extent of the divine self-revelation. When, therefore, the Son of God in his boundless love took our nature upon him and entered the temporal order as perfect man, humanity's capacity to worship received the greatest possible incentive and en-

couragement. Such an incarnation of the divine revealed beyond all possibility of dispute that God is love and in love cherishes and saves the creatures he has made.

It is to be noted that in the wisdom of divine providence the Incarnation was not understood at first. The Son of God came quite quietly to earth without any startling or conspicuous parade of deity. Had men from the first known him to be divine, awe and reverence and the desire to worship might sorely have impeded that revelation of God that he had come to give. Therefore the deity was closely veiled ; men saw only a perfect man living a life of perfect love. That in itself was revelation vast enough for a season ; later when that lesson had been well and truly learned men would be shown that he, whom they had loved and trusted and admired, merited also their fullest worship because he was the Son of God made flesh. It was only when men had grasped in considerable degree the wonder and the marvel of that life of perfect love that the time came for them to know whose life in reality it was.

During the public ministry of Jesus there were many who surmised about his person, even amongst those who did not accept him as counsellor and leader. Amongst his own chosen followers high hopes were at times entertained ; there were those who accounted him the promised Messiah who had come to redeem Israel ; there were perhaps even those who in moments of special enthusiasm and excitement accounted him in some sense the Son of God and worthy of some degree of worship. But all these exalted ideas and lofty hopes vanished at the Crucifixion. Death was the proof that here was no deity or divinity ; for those who had followed Jesus the Cross was conclusive evidence, not indeed that he was a cheat and a deceiver, but that they had cheated and deceived themselves when in enthusiasm they had at times allowed themselves to imagine that their loved leader was more than human. They knew now that the judgement of their calmer moments had been the true one, that Jesus was a man, but only a man, of superlative goodness, the like of whom they would not see again. Nothing is clearer in the Gospel records than that the Crucifixion left the followers of Jesus broken and impotent

men whose hopes were irremediably shattered and for whom the future held nothing but sad memories of the past.

The post-resurrection appearances of Jesus, their intercourse with him, his Ascension, and the outpouring of his Spirit at Pentecost, followed by the sure consciousness that they were in spiritual communion with their Lord, changed the gloom and sadness of the followers of Jesus into triumphant hope and assured confidence of victory. We know how men, who had been broken and dispirited, went forth to win the world for Christ and in the new power of his Spirit turned it upside down. But side by side with the work of active evangelism there went forward also a task of supreme difficulty and profound importance, the task of understanding the person of Christ. In the discharge of that task much was gradually accomplished, and in due course the Church produced something approximating to a final formulation of her Christology in the Chalcedonian definition. But not even those who whole-heartedly accept, as does the present writer, the Chalcedonian definition regard that definition as final in the sense that it leaves no room for further thought and enquiry. On the contrary, the Chalcedonian definition is to be regarded not so much as the last word that can ever be thought or written upon Christology, but rather as a kind of plummet-line whereby we may test the accuracy of later Christological speculations. The Chalcedonian definition is entitled to the utmost respect as a conclusion reached carefully and prayerfully by the undivided Church upon a matter of which the supreme importance was fully recognised; and, though each age must re-think its Christology for itself in the thought-forms of its own day, any age may well feel the gravest doubts both of the quality of its spiritual life and of the accuracy of its thinking, if these seem to lead it to conclusions about the person of Christ which accord but ill with the Chalcedonian definition. It is only because we believe them to be in substantial accord with that definition that we now venture to put forward certain Christological speculations that may perhaps prove to be of interest both in themselves and in relation to our main theme, the worshipfulness of God.

The psychologists, with the aid of a little prompting from the philosophers, are coming to realise the existence of an element in personality which will never be a subject for psychological study. We may for the moment call this element the original self, and illustrate its existence by a brief consideration of the process of reflection. A man may reflect, and he may watch himself reflecting, but the self that does the watching is not precisely the same in psychological content as the self that does the reflecting. Similarly a man may watch himself watching himself reflecting, but again the self that does the watching of the watching of the self reflecting is somewhat different in its psychological content from the self that does the watching of the self reflecting. To put it quite popularly, we can never catch up with the original self; the moment we try to make it the object of reflection it becomes something other than the subject that is reflecting; another original self slips, as it were, into its place and wrests its title from it. There is always a self that never becomes the object of reflection, an original, elusive self that can never be got into the consulting room or laboratory of introspection. We are inclined to think that this self may be of considerable importance in Christological thought, and we propose for reasons that will shortly become apparent to call it the noumenal self.

One of the most characteristic features of the original, elusive, self of which we have spoken is that it cannot really be got into the world of time and space. Now though we do not expect selves as spiritual entities to have any special relation to space we do expect them, when they are human selves, to have some relation to time. Moreover, selves as they are known to us in introspection have this relation. The self as known to psychology is temporal. But the original self, to whose existence we can argue, but which we can never make the object of our introspection, seems to be independent of time or outside time. At all events we are never able to get it into such a temporal process as introspection. We may, therefore, not unfittingly borrow a Kantian term and call it the noumenal self. It is desirable, however, to add here that it is not perhaps absolutely vital

to the position we hope to develop that the noumenal self should be absolutely and completely extra-temporal, though we are inclined to believe that in point of fact it is thus extra-temporal ; but we regard it as necessary to our position to hold that the noumenal self can never be the object of human introspection, as such introspection is normally understood.

It will now be convenient to state our Christology shortly and positively and then to consider various points that arise in relation to it. We hold, then, that the Incarnation may legitimately be understood on these lines. The eternal pre-existent Logos, the second person of the Trinity, was, from the first moment of the conception of the infant Jesus, his noumenal self. The babe was born and grew to manhood ; as his physical development took place, there took place also the parallel development of his self-consciousness. He thought of himself first as child and then as boy and as man, but always, as we believe, as one within the limits of humanity. The self of Jesus, so far as it could be made the object of introspection, was a human self ; but the self which no introspection could ever reach was divine. The psychological self of Jesus was man ; his noumenal self was God.

Having thus very briefly stated our position, we shall now discuss some of the many points that arise in connection with it. In the first place we may note that it is characteristic of man that he has no final knowledge of his noumenal self by introspection. None of us knows by introspection what he really is. The ultimate nature of our reality is not found by the inward glance, however searching. So far as introspection is concerned, man remains a mystery to himself, his personality is never completely understood ; man can look at himself, but he can never see the whole of himself, and that which is invisible he reaches, if he reaches it at all, in part by argument and in part by faith. Man's noumenal self is given to him by God when he calls him into being. It is this spark of ultimate reality that makes man an immortal soul ; man is ultimately real, not indeed in the sense that he is God, but in the sense that by the gift of God his noumenal self is of such spiritual quality as to be immortal. It is the noumenal self that makes a man the man

he is, for it is the noumenal self that, by its action on, and its reaction to, all that it encounters in this world of time and space, makes a man's self-conscious personality what it is.

In this connection two points need emphasis. In the first place man's noumenal self is free. Whether such freedom means anything below the level of the conscious we simply do not know, but at the level of the conscious it means the power of real choice between ends, and makes man a moral being who can give or withhold that for which God asks. In the second place, though we do not know and are never likely fully to understand how such a relation is possible, we must insist that man's noumenal self is in relation to his material organism from the first instant that the latter begins to be. Possibly, indeed, if we knew all, we should see that it is the noumenal self that makes the human organism an organism instead of a mere fortuitous concourse of atoms. It is at least certain that it is the noumenal self that makes the material organism to be the material organism of an individual human being and not just a material organism. Also, when we have made the fullest allowance for differences caused by variations in the material organisms, it is differences in the noumenal self that prevent all human beings from being spiritually identical, and that explain variety of vocation and diversity of spiritual gifts, as well as the fundamental fact that men are individual as spirits and not simply spiritually identical though materially distinct.

If man's noumenal self is God's direct creation and gift, we might reasonably suppose that it is the function of the noumenal self to express itself ever more fully in and through the psychological and physical life of the material organism ; and there is a good deal of evidence to suggest that such is in fact the case. It would, for instance, be possible to describe the perfect human life as one in which the noumenal self became increasingly dominant over its psychological and material environment. In the period prior to birth and in earliest infancy the purely physical seems to be dominant, but with the growth of self-consciousness the noumenal self enters increasingly upon its kingdom and,

ideally, in due course attains complete sway. It seems to be characteristic of the noumenal self that it strives to get itself, as it were, thrust through into consciousness. Man seems to be so constituted that his progress largely consists in an increased realisation of his noumenal self. The infant or the very primitive savage are content to live on what is practically the animal level, with little or no introspection or reflective thought ; as man develops in civilisation and culture he becomes increasingly self-analytical ; and finally a religion such as Christianity would urge that man only fulfils his destiny when his noumenal self has achieved and become all that it has in it to become and achieve.

There is, however, an objection which may fittingly be taken at this point. A critic might urge that, though we have insisted that the noumenal self is not open to introspection, we yet seem to have found ourselves able to make a good many statements about it. We may, therefore, legitimately be asked how we obtained such knowledge. In the first place we would remind the critic that a good deal of knowledge may be obtainable by various methods of argument about objects that cannot be known by introspection ; and in the second place we are inclined to urge that in proportion as man lives perfectly he brings his noumenal self nearer to self-consciousness. We should hold, for instance, that the child who is carefully brought up in a Christian household and who also responds with all its power to the light and truth that are set before it, and who continues this process through all the years of adult life, comes in time to see itself as it is in the eyes of God, in other words, to know its noumenal self, with a clarity that can be obtained in no other way. When life is thus lived the noumenal self seems in considerable measure to be visible to direct introspection ; but it is probable that it is never entirely visible because of two facts, the fact of sin and the fact of createdness. We do not know ourselves precisely as we are, partly because we are sinners and partly because we are created beings. Sin blinds, and createdness limits, our powers of perception.

It is, of course, a commonplace of Christian theology that the sinner, as sinner, does not see things as they are.

In proportion as he is a sinner his moral standards are perverted ; that which is evil he thinks good, and that which is good he thinks evil. This fundamental confusion warps the sinner's judgement in a variety of directions, and he becomes a dangerous and unreliable guide on the road of life both to others and to himself, because he has no clear understanding either of what they or he are, or of what they and he are meant to become. It is indeed true that in the main human beings sway somewhat uncertainly between good and evil, never wholly following either one or the other. In consequence, whilst perhaps none is wholly blinded by sin, and whilst even the most evil may retain some comprehension of, and desire for, their true being, none also is so devoid of sin as not to be in some degree blinded, and to that extent unable to see himself as he is or to realise the full glory of his God-given noumenal self.

Secondly, even if we assume the existence of individuals who have lived perfectly, it is hardly to be thought that their noumenal selves would be transparent to introspection. It seems to be a necessary element of our creatureliness that we always remain, even the best of us, something of a mystery to ourselves. It is true that the better we are, the more completely we see ourselves as God sees us and know ourselves with that fullness of knowledge with which we are ourselves known by God. The saintly soul possesses for itself something of a lucid transparency ; it does in very large degree comprehend itself, yet always there are opaque patches and fringes of obscurity which are not entirely due to the last vestiges of sin, but which are in some measure caused by that fact of createdness which prevents the noumenal self from ever knowing as it is known.

We turn now to consider the noumenal self of the incarnate Lord. Though one approaches any such enquiry not only with reverence, but also with grave doubts as to whether the Incarnation can ever be fully intelligible to human minds, one is yet emboldened to go forward by the reflection that it is no dishonour to God's eternal Reason if we seek to use, so far as in us lies, the reason that he himself has given us. The noumenal self of Jesus was, we hold, the pre-existent Logos. It was the Logos who personalised a human nature

which without him would have been impersonal, if indeed we can imagine it existing at all. Whether such personalising by the Logos involved limitation or self-sacrifice in the eternal sphere we have no direct data for determining ; but certain considerations can be adduced. In the first place it is to be noted that in this respect the Incarnation only presents in a conspicuous and acute form a problem which really meets us with equal force in relation to the Creation. It is very difficult, and perhaps impossible, for us to see how that which is eternally self-existent and self-complete can enter into relations with that which is temporal and dependent. But though we can hardly understand the how, the why is somewhat more intelligible. We may not know how God created and sustains the universe, or how it was possible for the Logos to become incarnate, but we can more readily understand why such wondrous happenings took place. Love was their why, and love alone explains them.

It is to be noted that the Incarnation is more obviously a work of love than the Creation, and that, as a matter of history, men have commonly argued from the love in the life of Jesus to the love behind the universe. Those who knew Jesus best in his life on earth were those who were most conscious of his love both towards the Father and towards men. They were well aware that love ruled his life and was the fundamental principle by which that life could be explained. When later, as the result of the Resurrection and Ascension and their experience of the indwelling Spirit of Christ, men came to acknowledge that the Jesus whom they had known and loved on earth was more than human, and saw in him the Son of God made flesh, they realised with a vividness and force such as they had not previously experienced that the heart of God is love.

That truth had indeed been known long before in theory ; it had, for instance, been proclaimed by Hosea, and to some extent men had believed in it and lived by it and put its implications into practice. But the Incarnation as Christians understood it was, and is, the supreme evidence of the love of God for man. So soon as men grasped and understood it in all its marvellous wonder it began to change their lives and their outlook upon their whole environment. Convinced by

their personal experience of Jesus, both in his life on earth and as the ascended Giver of his Spirit, that God is love, men came to believe also that the created universe was a work of love and as such good. The Jewish Scriptures had indeed for some centuries proclaimed in their opening pages the goodness of the world as God had made it ; but men believed that proclamation with a fervour hitherto unknown, when they had seen the Father's Agent in the work of creation living and moving as man amongst men and had found him radiant with love. There still remained indeed much in the world that they did not understand and which it was hard to reconcile with the existence of a God of love ; but, with the life and death of God's Son on their behalf before their eyes, they were content to trust the larger hope and to believe that those things, that seemed contrary to God's love, seemed so partly through human sinfulness and frailty, and partly through the limitations of finite created vision, and not at all because of any failure of love or goodness in the creative functioning of deity.

It is to be remembered that no activity of the Logos within the temporal sphere involves limitation of his perfect functioning within the eternal Trinity. God is infinite love, and infinite love is neither lessened nor increased by its manifestation within the temporal sphere. When it was the will of the Logos to become the noumenal self of Jesus no limitation of deity within the eternal sphere was involved ; but there came into being within the temporal sphere what had not previously existed within that sphere, a manifestation of God as man. The historic, concrete Jesus who lived and taught in Palestine and who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, had no personal individuality apart from the eternal Logos who by personalising perfect human nature became man. It is not inaccurate or incorrect to speak of the Logos as personalising *a* perfect human nature, provided such a phrase does not lead us to suppose that the human nature personalised by the Logos was already individualised when he personalised it. The only, and the perfectly sufficient, individualisation received by the perfect human nature taken by the Logos was given it when he personalised it.

Points somewhat similar to the above emerge when we

examine the statement, not infrequently made, that the Logos became not a man but man. Such a phrase is both legitimate and desirable if it is meant to exclude any suggestion that the Logos in becoming man became some person other than himself. The Incarnation, as traditionally understood, does not involve a personal change for the Logos, it involves only the taking of human nature. After the Incarnation the Logos, both in his eternal reality and in his temporal manifestation, is the same person as he was before. The Jesus of history is not some other person, into whom the Logos has in some miraculous way changed himself; the Jesus of history is simply the Logos living as man.

On the other hand, to say that the Logos became not a man but man, is an expression more dangerous than helpful if it leads us to suppose that the Jesus of history was a kind of man in general without being any sort of man in particular. Teaching of this kind is sometimes to be heard from the pulpit and is sometimes to be met with in theological writing. Yet such a view would seem to be definitely erroneous and to have its origin in a confusion of thought. It is simply historically inaccurate to say that when the Logos became incarnate he assumed the perfection of manhood in general. In the first place 'manhood in general' and 'the perfection of manhood in general' are both abstract terms expressing ideas which are ultimately idealised generalisations from experience and which, so far as they have concrete reality at all, have it sectionally and piecemeal in individual men. It is true that a Christian disciple of Plato might be disposed to argue for the existence of an idea of perfect manhood laid up in the mind of God, but, even if we grant the existence of such an idea, it does not at all follow that it could be realised concretely in its fullness in the life of an individual man. Indeed, if we tried to imagine a man who possessed the perfection of manhood in general we should be faced with a strange and in some ways self-contradictory figure. Our imaginary hero would be, for instance, the perfect ruler and the perfect subject; the perfect teacher and the perfect pupil; the perfect leader and the perfect follower; he would be supremely able at all the arts and sciences, and at every handicraft and every

sport. We need not pursue the catalogue ; such a being as we have imagined might be very fascinating and interesting to meet, but it would never occur to us to think of him as an example of perfect humanity.

Moreover, when we leave theory and look at the actual facts of history, we do not find that Jesus possessed the perfection of manhood in general. He was a perfectly definite, concrete individual with a date for his birth and a date for his death, with marvellous powers and capacities, and also devoid apparently of knowledge and gifts that were not needed for perfect living by one in his circumstances. Something has been said already of the limitations in our Lord's knowledge ; and, as to the absence of certain gifts, no one seriously supposes that our Lord possessed a natural aptitude for all the arts and crafts. There is, for instance, no evidence to suggest that he had special aptitude for the working or understanding of machinery and, though we know that he would have been thorough and conscientious and no doubt competent in all that he undertook, it is a little striking that there is no suggestion in the Gospels that Jesus was supremely able as a carpenter. What Jesus did, in fact, possess was all that he needed to possess, the gifts and qualities which, combined with perfection of personality, would enable him to live the perfect life in the environment in which as a fact of history he lived.

It is worth while, however, to note the element of truth which lies, though, as we venture to think, very confusedly, behind the contention that when the Logos became incarnate he took upon him the perfection of manhood in general. Probably the truth here that is worth preserving is that it is unthinkable that the Logos either could or would become incarnate as any kind of imperfect man. The Logos, being infinite love and divinely perfect, could not without denial of his perfect nature become that which was in any way imperfect. In whatever mode of life he became incarnate, whether as carpenter, or as scholar, or as king, he would be perfect in that mode. He would not indeed possess the perfections of other modes in which he was not incarnate ; but, in the mode in which he was in actual fact incarnate, he would never lack any gift or quality appropriate to com-

plete perfection in that mode. In this sense it is true to say, if we speak abstractly, that when the Logos becomes incarnate he takes the perfection of manhood in general ; but when we speak concretely, with recollection of the facts of history, as set forth in the Gospels, we shall simply say that when in actual fact the Logos became incarnate he took just those elements of our humanity, and only those, that were required for the perfect living of the particular individual life which, as we know from history, was in fact his.

We may continue our enquiry into the noumenal self of Jesus by some consideration of his self-consciousness. It is, of course, true that we are sadly handicapped in any such investigation by lack of data. For a great many years of our Lord's life we possess no evidence whatever ; and even of the period of his public ministry the Gospels cover only a comparatively small fraction. Moreover, their narrative is mainly concerned with the external activities of Jesus, and it is certainly poles removed from the modern psychological novel which revels in minute analysis of the consciousness of its characters. It can, therefore, be contended with a considerable degree of truth that we are not in a position to describe the self-consciousness of Jesus in any detail. Though there is, of course, a certain amount of evidence available in the Gospels it is not extensive, and in the main we are dependent upon *a priori* reasoning. None the less it is worth while to see how far this, in conjunction with the rather scanty evidence, will carry us, and the attempt will at least serve to illustrate our conception of the person of Christ.

As the baby Jesus grew to boyhood he became, as other babies become, conscious of himself and of his environment. In that environment there were other boys similar to himself. So far as his senses could perceive there was no marked difference between him and them, and inevitably he thought of himself as a boy, just as he thought of them as boys. He was, of course, aware, as they were aware, of his individuality. He knew that he was not they nor they he ; but he was also aware that their thoughts and his often moved in parallel lines, so that he and they could usually understand one another. It is not probable that these facts

were the object of much, if any, conscious reflection in our Lord's boyhood ; but they were sufficiently realised to enable him to live a normal human boyhood. He was conscious, indeed, of differences between his fellows and himself. He was much more interested in Jehovah, and much more ready to offer him worship than were the boys whom he knew in Nazareth. He felt the pre-eminence of Jehovah in ways that they did not, and he recognised that his whole life must be sanctified for Jehovah's service and in Jehovah's honour with a vividness and a reality that were unknown to any of his contemporaries. In consequence there were things done by other boys from which the boy Jesus abstained ; there were things left undone by other boys which the boy Jesus was diligent to accomplish.

As a result of these differences in outlook and behaviour the boy Jesus must have felt himself to be better than his companions. Our first instinct is to be repelled by such a thought, because in our experience those boys who feel themselves to be better than their companions are normally nothing of the kind, being unpleasant and conceited prigs with no true understanding of their actual spiritual condition. But with the boy Jesus the situation was otherwise. In the first place there is the undeniable and fundamental fact that he *was* better than his contemporaries, and he would have been in error had he thought otherwise ; and secondly, we can be certain that the recognition of his own goodness by the boy Jesus aroused in him only feelings of deep gratitude to God for his protecting care, and of deep sorrow, devoid of all patronage, for his companions, and an enthusiastic longing to help and serve them. Boyhood is very often a time of generous impulses ; but there has never been a boy with such generous impulses as Jesus. Sometimes the generous impulses of boyhood are but impulses, and not very deeply grounded ; the generous impulses of Jesus had their ultimate basis in his noumenal self, in that eternal, ever-loving Logos who, by personalising perfect human nature, became Jesus.

The boy Jesus never failed in love ; when he thought of himself at all, he must have thought of himself as loving. It is not probable that in boyhood Jesus was greatly given

to introspection and self-analysis. Boyhood has periods in which these activities appeal, but in the main boyhood is a time when the eyes are turned outward rather than inward and external activity attracts rather than self-conscious reflection. Moreover, it is not characteristic of love to be engaged in self-analysis. Love rejoices to give and to spend ; love is looking for opportunities of service, and is eager to be helping those in need ; love has not much time to think about itself because it is so busy thinking about others. But even if at times the boy Jesus thought about himself and wondered, as boys sometimes do, at the mystery of his personality, and asked himself who and what he was, he would never find it possible to answer the question fully and completely. He would be able to answer it sufficiently for perfect living, as we also in our own case are able to answer a similar question ; but his original self, the noumenal self that no introspection ever reaches, would elude the boy Jesus as it eludes us. And so the reality of the humanity was preserved ; the Logos as incarnate knew not himself as Logos, he knew himself only within the measure of his humanity, first as perfect boy and then as perfect man.

For the perfect boy Jesus fulfilled the promise of his youth, and as there was no blemish in his childhood, so also was there none in his perfect manhood. There was, of course, growth in personality, a widening outlook, a deepening of character compatible with the passing of the years, but always at each and every stage perfection, perfect love eager to give itself to God and man in the ways that best accorded with its human gifts and limitations. We have seen already how difficult it is to attempt to define with accuracy even comparatively minor points in the self-consciousness of the full-grown Jesus, to say, for instance, when his Messianic consciousness first began, or at what period in his life the thought first came to him that perhaps it might be his destiny to serve his brethren by suffering unto death. We do not know the details of the self-consciousness of Jesus, but we do know its general principle, the principle of love. It is that principle that gives to the life of Jesus its marvellous simplicity, and makes it, once its dominant principle is grasped, the easiest life to understand of all the lives that

have been lived upon the earth. There is no mystery about the life of Jesus except the mystery of love. Love explains all his life ; there is nothing in the life of Jesus which love cannot explain. It is true, indeed, that many things befell him which were manifestations of hatred, not of love, but these were things from without that threw themselves in hostility against his life, yet they never broke its unity as a perfect manifestation of love. Jesus met hatred with love and hostility with love ; he never wished to do otherwise, for he was infinite Love living within the limits of humanity.

It is not, indeed, to be thought that the perfectly loving life of Jesus was a life lived either without struggle or without pain. It was neither, for love can be tempted and love can suffer. Eternal deity knows no temptation, it abides unmoved, tranquil in its infinite perfection, but eternal deity when it takes upon it the measures of our manhood, can know temptation. The Logos as Logos is never tempted, for no temptation could reach the realm of his infinite being, but the Logos, incarnate as man, can know temptation, and knew it to the uttermost in his life upon the earth. Similarly with pain. It may be that, as the orthodox tradition has always maintained, there is no pain in the eternal Trinity, abiding serene in infinite perfection beyond the reach of all temporal chance or woe ; but there is pain for the second Person of that Trinity as incarnate, when he takes our manhood upon him and, after living a life in which there was much suffering and pain, dies by the pain of the Cross.

It is indeed the wonder of the Incarnation that it shows us infinite Love stripping itself of its immunity from temptation, toil and pain, and giving itself in a human life for man's salvation. Jesus shows us God as none other could ever show him, because he is God and has, in that spirit of self-sacrificing love which is the essence of the Godhead, so laid aside his deity that, in his Incarnation, that deity is hidden from his sight. When Jesus walked in Palestine long ago men did not know him in the fullness of his being ; not even to himself was Jesus thus fully known. Some scorned and mocked him, accounted him either fool

or knave ; loyally obedient to the Father's will he knew, with an inward certainty which for him at least was absolute, that he was neither knave nor fool, but in love he bore the mockery and the scorn, and in love he offered adoring homage to the Father, glad that even thus hardly he was allowed to do his will. Others there were who loved and honoured Jesus, who accounted him perfect with a perfection they had never known before, and he did nothing to discredit their high estimate of him, he could not, for there was in him no consciousness of sin, but the honour and the love that men offered him he in his turn offered in thankfulness to the Father, for Jesus knew that only in the power and strength given him by that Father could perfectness of life be his.

But whether mocked and scorned or loved and honoured Jesus faced life as man. The love of the Logos did not repent because of the hardness of the hearts of men ; the Incarnation ran its full course ; one who was God, but knew it not, drank as man the cup of suffering to its dregs. There is a loneliness at times in all men's lives, at its best such loneliness is a God-given reminder that we are strangers and pilgrims upon the earth, and that it is our wisdom to look ever onward to the Father's house of many mansions. Jesus did not escape the loneliness which is the common lot of humanity. He knew the loneliness of perfect goodness ; sin came as a barrier between all others and himself ; he knew the loneliness of love when it is offered and rejected ; he knew the loneliness of desertion when they all forsook him and fled ; he knew the loneliness of that sense of utter spiritual dereliction when it seemed as if God had gone from life and he was utterly alone for ever. Yet this loneliness that in its varying forms assailed the spirit of Jesus never broke it, never even caused it to swerve from the path of love. Often, no doubt, this and other temptations tried the spirit of Jesus to the very limits of its endurance, the struggle was arduous and costing ; but, because in love he relied whole-heartedly upon the love of God for him, he was given strength and faith to endure unto the end in love.

With the death of Jesus upon the Cross, and with his conquest of death by the Resurrection, there came a tre-

mendous change, which no doubt can never be more than partially intelligible to those who are still living under the conditions of time and space. It is, however, possible to put forward not unreasonable conjectures, and for our own part we should be disposed to urge that at death the noumenal self ceases to be elusive and becomes transparent to introspection, or, in other words, knows itself through and through as it is. Life here is a time of preparation and training, a period also when we see through a glass darkly. During life on earth we are neither spiritually nor intellectually full grown. It is not that we lack during our lives on earth anything that is essential for perfect living ; we have all without which perfect human life would be impossible ; but whilst we are on earth we have not yet attained to the fullness of our being. As it was put long ago, we do not yet know what we shall be. Moreover, it is an element in our period of tutelage that we do not yet know what we are. Our own personalities are a mystery to us, in part intelligible, in part vague and elusive. For the Christian theist, however, it is reasonable to hold that, if we pass the time of our sojourning here as we ought, a fuller revelation will be ours hereafter. Here we know in part, but then we shall know even as we are known. Training is excellent in its place and so is tutelage ; but both are preparatory to something else, neither is an end in itself. It is, therefore, reasonable to believe that when the training has been satisfactorily completed and all the demands of a period of tutelage fully met, there will come to the spirit thus prepared a fullness of vision and a richness of experience hitherto quite unknown, and these will both impart and include a profundity of self-knowledge vastly beyond anything previously attained.

We may now reverently apply these thoughts to the death of Jesus. That death of shame was followed by a glorious Resurrection. Just at first those who had loved and honoured Jesus were so overcome by joy and amazement that they could neither believe nor understand. But incredulity and inability to understand both quickly vanished, and the followers of Jesus came not merely to believe in his Resurrection, but to understand that it was necessary, because in a

just universe ruled by a righteous God it was impossible that one whose life had been so perfect could be holden by death. We shall find that the belief of the first disciples, which is also our own belief, translates readily into the thought-forms and phrasing of this study. Jesus was living love, and love because it is in accord with the heart of God never dies. It is true that the love in the life of Jesus was in its temporal manifestation a created love, a love therefore that existed not in its own right, but because called into being and willed by God. But, though Jesus did not know it, as a metaphysical fact the roots of his temporal love were in eternity. He knew, indeed, as a fact of his spiritual experience that he loved with a love that was not his own, with a love that was given to him from above in response to prayer ; and such was the truth at the level of his humanity ; but at the deeper level of that noumenal self, which during earthly life is never completely known, Jesus loved with a love that was eternally his own, for he was the pre-existent Logos incarnate as man.

We believe that death revealed to Jesus the fullness of his selfhood. By death he passed from the world of time and space, and his noumenal self, never fully at home in the temporal world, ceased to be fugitive and elusive ; and he, who upon the earth had known himself as Jesus of Nazareth, one chosen by God in pre-eminent degree to live and work in love for men, after death knew himself in his eternal reality as the infinitely loving Logos, who had become incarnate in the world of time and in that world had lived and died as man for other men less loving and less perfect than himself. The love, which at the eternal level had been infinite and self-existent and which, without either loss or gain in its eternal perfectness, had become incarnate in the temporal world and in that world had remained, at the created level, perfect love, returned after a season to that eternal realm which yet it had never left, being worthy to return because always, in whatever state it found itself, it had loved utterly, keeping nothing back.

It is, of course, a fact of history that the Christian evangelisation of the world began with the outpouring of the Spirit of Jesus at Pentecost, and it is important to see why

this should be the case. In the Incarnation God had become organic in the created world to an extent that had hitherto been unknown. He had indeed created the world and sustained it, but he had not in any real sense lived in it as a part of it. That crowning wonder we believe to have occurred when the Logos became incarnate. It is not, of course, to be supposed that the whole of deity became incarnate, nor even that the Incarnation brought about any kind of diminution in the Godhead; none the less, it is to be believed that the Son of God became man, lived and died as man, and as man was organic in the world of created things in a way in which God himself as God could never be. Now it is an integral feature of the Christian tradition that the manhood that was taken by the Logos when he became incarnate was not again laid aside, but, spiritualised and glorified, passed triumphant into heaven as an element, if we may so phrase it, in the permanent being of the Logos.

It cannot be denied that the conception, that the Logos eternally retains the manhood he assumed at his incarnation, is a difficult one, even when we lay considerable stress on the modifications in that manhood that we may reasonably hold to have been effected by its passing through death and resurrection. Yet that the manhood was thus retained is an integral part of the Christian tradition, and certain considerations may be adduced which, whilst not rendering this feature of the tradition completely comprehensible (probably it can never be that to finite minds), do at least make it rather more readily intelligible. In the first place it is worth noting that it is at all events no more difficult to believe in the retention of manhood by deity after it has been once assumed, than it is to believe that deity in the first instance assumed our human nature. It is no more difficult to believe in the Logos remaining in some sense man after he has once become man, than it is to believe in his originally becoming man. There is at least a presumption that, if it were fitting for deity to manifest himself as man in the temporal sphere, it might also be fitting for him in some sense to retain that manhood after his withdrawal from the temporal sphere.

Further, we can see the devotional value for many minds

in the thought that the humanity of the Logos was not laid aside at the Ascension. We have the written record of the life of Jesus, and that record has won for him the allegiance of many millions who have looked at his life of love and who have felt that this is the life for man. Some have not gone further than that, but very many have ; and these latter have acknowledged that the life of Jesus is not only the life for man, but is also the life of God, and they have bowed themselves in adoration before their incarnate Lord. For the great majority, perhaps even for all, of these Christian believers it would be a serious difficulty to their faith if it were necessary to believe that their incarnate Lord laid aside his manhood when he ascended to the Father. Such a belief, if the evidence constrained men to hold it, would give to the Incarnation something of an episodic quality even in human eyes. It would seem that there was nothing in manhood that could be borne into the eternal realms, and such an assumption could not fail to be depressing and even crushing to the human spirit. Moreover, if the manhood taken at the Incarnation is laid aside at the Ascension, for many believers there would arise grave difficulty in focussing their devotion. We may legitimately regret that very many Christians have a sadly inadequate idea of the absolute being of God, and of the Trinity in Unity abiding eternally unmoved in the perfection of infinite love; yet at least, if God is such that he gives his only begotten Son for man's salvation, it is a tremendous aid to worship and devotion if men can believe that the manhood, which was the vehicle of the life of the Logos upon the earth and of which men took knowledge in Palestine long ago, is even yet united with the Logos in the realm beyond the grave.

It is to be observed that this question of the retention of manhood by the ascended Lord is much more important and goes far deeper than any problem about the nature of the resurrection body. That problem has its own difficulty and its own importance, but it is, after all, largely a material problem ; whereas the enquiry before us is concerned with man's whole mental and moral constitution, with, as we may perhaps put it, his psychological make-up. How far is it possible for such a mental and moral constitution, when

it has been the means or mode through which the eternal Logos has lived temporally a perfect human life, to pass on into a realm of a different order and have its abiding place in the bosom of the holy and undivided Trinity?

We shall find ourselves best fitted to frame an answer to this extremely difficult and profound question if we begin by reminding ourselves that in the life of a perfect man his whole psychological make-up is organised in the service of love. In and through his mental and moral constitution the love which abides in his spirit goes forth towards God and towards man. The perfect man would be the perfect vehicle for the transmission of love, because his spirit would be full of love and ever receptive of love, and that spirit would so have organised every aptitude and power of mind and body that, at the human level, they would be perfect instruments for all the purposes of love. It was thus also with one who was something more than perfect man. In the Jesus of history, who was the Logos incarnate as perfect man, there was a human nature that was organised to be the perfect instrument of a spirit of love. The mental and moral constitution of Jesus, his psychological make-up, never failed to respond perfectly to the demands of the spirit of love that was the flaming centre of his life.

Now after the death of Jesus and his glorious Resurrection and Ascension we hold that he attained to complete self-knowledge and knew himself as the eternal, pre-existent Logos who had become incarnate in the temporal order. But the Logos, whose love was such that he became man for man's salvation, did not desert man when his own incarnate life was ended. It is not the nature of infinite love to abandon a work of rescue that has been begun, nor is it the nature of the Persons of the eternal Trinity to change. The Logos remained eager always for the salvation of men and therefore, just as he took human nature to manifest himself more fully to men upon the earth, so we may believe that when his incarnate life was ended he needed that same human nature, now ascended and glorified, that through it he might have fellowship with men. On earth that nature had been the perfect vehicle for the revelation of his love towards God and man; now, glorified and freed from the physical

limitations of the flesh, it became a perfect and universal vehicle whereby the Logos might come into communion and fellowship with every human soul that would receive him at whatever time or place.

We can now see the answer, at least in part, to the question why the Christian evangelisation of the world began with the outpouring of the Spirit of Jesus at Pentecost. First there had been the life of Jesus, a little piece of concrete history, a perfect human life, marvellous and heart-stirring, and yet withal a little depressing and discouraging, because showing up so painfully the faults and failings in the lives of all other men. Then there came the amazing experience that by his Resurrection and Ascension Jesus had somehow become universalised ; in Palestine men had journeyed far to meet him, now they found him within their hearts. They knew that it was he and none other, because he who came to them in their inmost being was of one spirit with him whom they had known and loved in Palestine, and that spirit was the spirit of love. And so the first disciples went forth to convert the world, pointing on the one hand to a love so great that it came down into the pages of history and lived and died for men, and on the other hand challenging men to know that love as eternally alive by opening their hearts to the Spirit of the ascended Jesus. In proportion as men receive that Spirit there comes to them that perfection of human nature which Palestine once saw and which is bestowed by him, whose nature then it was, upon those who seek it from him where now it is, with him in the heavenly places.

III

THE LOVING GOD

Now that we have given some consideration to the doctrine of the Incarnation, we are better able to enquire how far the fact that God is love is evocative of worship. To have attempted to answer this question before we had at hand some discussion of that Incarnation, which is at once the crowning proof and the supreme act of the divine love, would have been unsatisfactory and unwise. It will be remembered that here, as elsewhere in this study, we are moving within the limits of Christian theism. When the first Christian missionaries went forth to convert both the Jewish and the pagan world, they proclaimed, as Christian missionaries have been proclaiming ever since, the life and death of Jesus. That life and death, with all that they have wrought for men, and with all that they have revealed of God, are, of course, central in the Christian Gospel. None the less, it is not the message of Christianity that we should rest finally in the Incarnation. Man's only final resting-place is in God, and in God not as incarnate but in his eternal absolute perfection.

The Incarnation is a revelation under conditions of space and time of an eternal fact, and it has the merits and defects of such a revelation. For creatures like ourselves who live under conditions of space and time the Incarnation is of extraordinary value, because for us it has the appeal of the historic and the concrete. With the limitations of our humanity strong upon us we are often apt to feel that only the temporal is real, and to come to rest in history and science. Therefore it is to us most helpful to see God set forth in our own human setting. Seeing him there we know what God is like with a vividness and force otherwise unobtainable. Also with such a revelation to guide us we see more clearly our own destiny and realise more fully the grandeur and obligations of our humanity. Yet, on the

other hand, because we are creatures of time and space, we are tempted to rest in a spatial and temporal revelation and not to pass beyond it to that which it is intended to reveal. It is very wonderful to see God as man, but it is very fatal to religion to rest in that vision. For worship is the heart and soul of religion, and man is not worshipful. It is possible to contend that much English religion owes both its excellence and its failure to what is almost a national tendency to focus attention upon the incarnate Jesus rather than upon the transcendent God. The result is a valuable regard for conduct and character and a sad indifference both to the duty and to the privilege of worship. Jesus is honoured and respected, but God is not worshipped or adored. Doubtless such a criticism does not apply to any instructed Christian believer, but it is certainly applicable to much popular religion in Great Britain.

Yet those who keep their eyes focussed upon Jesus miss the vision that he came to bestow. Jesus is the revelation of God in terms of humanity, and that revelation was vouchsafed that we may have grace to see God as he is. We have been shown God loving as man that we may rise to the greater glory and see God loving as God. It is very wonderful to know the love of a perfect man ; it is still more wonderful to know the love of a God-Man ; but both alike pale into insignificance before the radiance of the love of God in his own triune being. For the love of a perfect man, though perfect, is perfect within the limits of humanity ; it is a finite, created love, a love that does not exist by its own power or might, and the love of a God-Man, as Christianity has known and knows it, is also a limited love, perfect indeed and very wonderful, but a love confined within the limits of humanity. But the love of God as it is within the Trinity is a boundless infinite love, for the lover and the loved are alike infinitely perfect, and their love is infinitely perfect too. God is the perfect subject of love, and God is the perfect object of love, and God is the perfect love that binds the perfect subject and the perfect object into one. This divine love is without beginning and without end ; it is uncreated and eternal ; it knows no limits to its perfection, for it is God himself. It is this love, and this love alone,

which is adorable, worshipful, entitled to the whole homage of man.

There are lesser loves known to man, the love of parents, the love of wife and children, the love of friends, and other loves less definitely personal, the love of school or college, the love of church or country, but at least for the instructed Christian these are all limited loves, not one of them may rightly claim an utter love in which there is no stint or reservation. A little care in analysis is indeed needed here, for it is not to be maintained that none of these loves may demand of man the utmost that he has to give, even life itself. On occasion, home or country, church or friend, may rightly ask a man to lay down his life to serve them ; but none of them may ask that a man should be ready to die on their behalf in any cause. Neither parents nor children nor friend nor wife, nor church nor country, are absolute ends ; they cannot claim without qualification ; they are entitled only to limited allegiance, and when such allegiance reaches its limits it ceases to serve. There is only one absolute end, the God who is infinite love. He can ask of man, and does ask of man, that he should give him all his love without grudging and without reserve. Because he is worthy of all, God asks for all ; and in proportion as man has knowledge of God's infinite love, he rejoices to give all that he has, or is, or hopes ever to have or to become, and such giving is an integral element in his adoring worship of the Highest.

In this connection we may fittingly consider the claim of Jesus to our love. At first hearing the average Christian would feel that here at least there is little to consider. He is familiar with the language of hymns and preachers and books of popular devotion, and all alike are emphatic in their assertion that he owes all and must give all to Jesus. It is worth while to note the extent to which that assertion is accurate. If we think first of the Jesus of history, of the Jesus who lived and taught in Palestine, the assertion is accurate in the sense that every claim that Jesus made was a legitimate claim, and, as such, one that ought to be granted and acknowledged. As perfect man Jesus never made an improper claim ; he was entitled to all for which he asked ;

but it is significant that there was a good deal for which he did not ask. When, for instance, he was requested to state which was the greatest commandment in the law, or in other words to summarise for men their main duties, he declared that the first commandment was to love God with all one's heart and soul and mind and strength, and that the second was to love one's neighbour as oneself. But he added nothing to suggest that the first commandment defined men's relation to himself; and it is most improbable that he thought that it did. In point of fact the claims that may properly be made by the Son of God as incarnate are definitely other and less than the claims that may be made by the Son of God in his transcendent perfection. The Son of God, as incarnate, has less claim upon men's allegiance than he has in his perfect deity because, as incarnate, he has added humanity to deity and humanity is neither worshipful, nor lovable without reservation, but deity is both. Because of the weakness of our humanity we may find it easier to render allegiance to the God-Man than to God, but it is well to recognise that it is a weakness and to strive to overcome it. God alone is worthy of man's uttermost allegiance and most devoted love, because God alone is love absolute and without qualification, love boundless, infinite and free.

We have spoken of God as being love absolute and without qualification, and it may be well to expand this phrase a little to avoid a possible misunderstanding. The phrase does not mean that there is nothing that can be said about the divine love because it lacks all qualities. If it were so, man would hardly find the divine love worshipful and adorable, because he would have an insufficient understanding of its nature. The divine love is without qualification in the sense that there is nothing, and can be nothing, which prevents it from being ever perfectly itself. The divine love is eternally fully realised; there is in it no potentiality; it is all that it would wish to be; it is infinite in the sense that by no kind of addition or subtraction could it become more loving than it is. Not merely is it impossible for man to imagine God being more loving than he is, it is impossible for God himself. God cannot be more loving than he is, for he is infinite love eternally actual.

It is, however, possible to qualify the divine love in the sense that we can speak of certain qualities inherent in that love. It is important to recognise that these qualities are in no sense a kind of extrinsic addition to the divine love ; they are, on the contrary, intrinsic properties of its nature and may be deduced from it. Here as elsewhere it is well to remember the coinherence of the divine attributes, and that there is nothing in any sense loose or casual about the divine unity. To comprehend the divine unity in its unity is doubtless beyond man's power. We can dimly see that in that unity the elements which we distinguish as the divine attributes are indistinguishably one, and that this one that they are is something rather different both from any of them separately and from any amalgamation of them that the human mind can conceive or imagine. Man only very dimly knows God in his perfect unity, that is, as he is ; we seem to know him more clearly when we begin to distinguish the divine attributes ; and in a sense we do, but also in a sense we know him less, for in proportion as we divide the unity we change its character and to that extent lose the vision of God perfect in his oneness.

Provided, however, that we remember that we are to some extent sundering in thought the divine unity it is not dangerous but helpful to note how the divine love is qualified by the other divine attributes. Such an enquiry will serve also to bring out yet more plainly the worshipful quality of the divine love. In the first place, then, it may be noted, the divine love is good ; and, being good, it loves with a love that is proportionate to the goodness of the object loved. Man, being all too often a morally mixed being, loves both wrong objects and also loves the right objects with wrong degrees of love. He will love passionately an object that is either altogether unworthy of his love, or at best only worthy of a slight degree of affection ; and the highest and noblest objects he loves but coldly or not at all. Man's love is only partially a good love, that is to say man's love only partially loves the good ; quite often it is given to the bad. But it is otherwise with perfect man. The love of a perfect man would be given to that which was good and in proportion to its goodness. The perfect man, therefore,

would love God alone wholly and completely, because God alone is good with a goodness that is worthy of an utter love. Not even a perfect man would love God with a love worthy of his goodness, because even perfect men are created and finite, and they can only love with a love that falls within the limits of their humanity. The Son of God himself in his earthly life loved the Father perfectly, but, as incarnate, he loved only with a perfect human love which was less than worthy of the divine goodness. His love was, of course, perfect relatively to its subject, but it was imperfect relatively to its object. Our love for God is all too often imperfect in relation even to its subject ; but though perfection be one day ours we shall not even then love God with a love that is adequate to his goodness.

The divine love, however, because it is perfectly good, never fails to be proportionate to the object of its love. That object is loved according to its goodness, loved much if it be greatly good, loved little if it be mainly evil. The thought, that God's love being good loves that which is good with a love proportionate to its goodness, suggests a variety of reflections. It raises, for instance, the question of the worth of the whole temporal order. God loves the created universe with a love proportionate to its goodness, but what is its goodness in the eyes of God ? That is a question to which we do not know the full answer. We are not really aware of the place of the universe in the divine scheme of things, and therefore we cannot know its actual worth to God. But we know that God thought fit to create it and that he now sustains it ; and we know also that he gave his Son to live and die for men. But we have also to remember that he did not give his Son in the infinity of his being but as incarnate ; and we can dimly see that the love of God would not have been good had he given his Son in his infinity for man, for no created thing is comparable in worth to God. If the Son had been given in his infinite perfection the unity of the Trinity (if we may imagine the unthinkable) would have been broken and the greater sacrificed for the less. Such sacrifice is never good nor would a love that prompted it be either good or worshipful.

Again, we know that he, who within the limits of manhood

revealed perfectly the mind of God, set little store upon material things and laid all the emphasis upon things of the spirit, upon goodness and truth and love. Therefore we suppose that such spiritual values as can be realised in the universe are the elements of its being that are most precious to the love of God, and that material things are only cherished in proportion as they serve spiritual ends. Thus we can believe that the love of God would allow a million stars to pass forthwith into nothingness if their passing served to increase only in the slightest degree the spiritual value of the universe. For the spiritual value of the universe is not a static value but a shifting one; it can increase and it can also decrease, and, though we do not know the worth of the whole temporal order in the eyes of God, we do know that its worth ought to be higher than it is and that it is our duty to make it so. Nor is there any real inconsistency between such a position and the belief that the divine Creator must somehow be able to sum what is, for us at least, a series, and to know the final value of the world process whilst, for those at least to whom it is a process, that process is still proceeding. For, however the value of the universe may be known to God and whatever that value may in fact be, it is reasonable to suppose that it will be, or that it is, higher than it otherwise would be if men strive to grow in goodness and purity and love.

The thought that God's love is proportionate to its object is full of encouragement for the earnest Christian, for it reminds him that God loves him not only for what he is, but for what he has it in him to become. The divine love being good loves not only actual goodness but the potentiality of goodness, for the potentiality of goodness is itself good; it is good that there should be the possibility of goodness. The Christian, therefore, feels himself already precious in God's sight; he knows that God's Son became incarnate and, as man, lived and died for his salvation; and he presses forward eager to actualise his potentialities so that, by becoming better than before, he may be able to receive yet more richly the gift of the love of God. Similarly the Christian shrinks from anything that is evil and which would in any degree corrupt and defile his soul, for he fears

greatly lest he may become more sinful than he is, and in proportion lose that love of God for him which is the joy of his being and the lodestar of his life.

Again, because the love of God is good and therefore can love only in proportion to the goodness of that which is loved, it is clear that evil spiritual beings, if such there are, must be largely outside God's love. To the extent that they are set upon evil and have organised the powers of their personalities for evil ends, to that extent they cannot be loved by God. Only in so far as there still remains in them an element of goodness can the divine love go forth to them. If there were anywhere in the created universe some being or power wholly given to evil, such being or power would be entirely destitute of the divine love. God cannot love that which is evil, and the wholly evil is in his sight utterly unlovable. If at first hearing this seems to make the divine nature harsh and forbidding we may adduce two considerations that will do much to modify such an impression.

In the first place, we may recollect that we must not permit ourselves to be deceived by the unprincipled character of much human love. Much that passes for love amongst men is not love at all in the eyes of God, because it ignores goodness and righteousness and truth. The love of God is always a perfectly principled love and we must not allow the defectiveness of human love to make us misinterpret it; rather, comparing our human love with the divine, we should realise its shortcomings and strive to raise it to a nobler level. Secondly, the attitude of God in refusing to love evil is not harsh, because all evil is in essence a defiance of his will. The universe as God made it was good; such evil as it now contains has come there by disregard of known standards. Men have wilfully at times chosen darkness instead of light, and the result has been that in proportion as they have entered the darkness they have not received the love of God. Of their own accord they have chosen to become unlike God, and God can only love that which is like himself. God does not ask indeed that man should love with an underived love and be good with a self-existent goodness, for that were to seek from

the creature that which no creature can ever give ; but God does ask from all created self-conscious beings that they should be loyal to his eternal standards in proportion as they have power to comprehend them. God himself is not merely perfectly good, he is perfect goodness ; and they, who in any degree refuse to follow goodness to the limits of their capacity, to that extent alienate themselves from God and cease to receive the divine love.

The love of God being proportionate in its bestowal to the goodness of the object loved can never be given in all its fullness to any created thing, or even to all created things together. Even if we imagined that in all respects the universe had perfectly fulfilled its destiny, and that there had been no sin or evil in all its worlds and no least failure of love, yet its limited and derived goodness could never be an adequate object for that infinite love which is God. God alone is an object good enough for the love of God ; and God loves himself with a love that he cannot give to aught outside himself. God is goodness utter and complete, self-existent and underived ; and such goodness merits a love proportionate to its greatness, a love which also is utter and complete, self-existent and underived. God would fail in goodness if he did not love himself with an infinite love, for such love must be given where it is deserved and God deserves it. Similarly God would fail in love if he did not love himself utterly and completely, for he is worthy of an infinite love, and love has failed if it goes not forth infinitely to an object of infinite worth.

We may note next that the divine love is qualified by the divine wisdom. The love of God is a wise love. There is no danger that in his love God will act foolishly or unwisely ; his perfectly wise love can never be betrayed into that which is in the least degree foolish or absurd. It follows, therefore, that we can rest assured of the perfect wisdom of all that God has done. We do not, indeed, know the infinite range of the divine activity ; it may be that our knowledge of it covers but a tiny fraction of its whole extent ; but we can be confident that, in those regions where we cannot follow it as well as in those where we are familiar with its working, the divine love is exercised with perfect wisdom. The

thought is a powerful antidote to any tendency to a pessimistic theology. There are, for instance, features in our own lives and features in the environment in which we live that are apt to be both discouraging and depressing. First and foremost, of course, there is the fact of sin. We may, as Christian theists, recognise that sin is our own fault ; we may also be able to see that a great deal of pain and suffering in the world and a great many temptations to sin take their origin in past sinfulness. Yet such recognition does not at all alter the fact that the presence of sin in the world is often felt to be discouraging and depressing. We may talk of the joy of fighting against sin and the gain to character that comes from the battle with evil yet, provided we are not confusing sin and temptation, we cannot deny that our fight is against that which ought never to have been, and that in certain moods the existence of that which ought never to have been may provide a fairly substantial basis for a pessimistic philosophy or theology.

Again, there are other elements in our experience which tend to discourage and depress us. There is, for instance, the wide range of human suffering, much of it perhaps due to human sin, yet hardly all, and much of it no doubt available as a means to moral progress and advance, yet again hardly all. There are, too, the unrealised possibilities of multitudes of men. Those possibilities are unrealised through many causes, often no doubt through mankind's sins and follies, but the failure to make them actual cannot always be thus explained ; and it is in some degree discouraging and depressing to see so much which, so far as we can judge, ought to have been, and yet which never was, realised and which cannot now be realised for ever. The thought that an opportunity once lost never comes again may be a bracing and virile thought whilst the opportunity is still before us ; but if the opportunity has, perhaps through no fault of ours, gone by unused, never to return, the thought that once encouraged acquires a gloom and a greyness that weigh upon the spirit. Nor must we forget amongst the things that can discourage and depress the almost countless sufferings of the brute creation. There is no need for exaggeration ; it may be that many, perhaps all, animals

feel pain much less than man, because their nervous systems are less highly organised than ours ; nor presumably are there with them, as there so often are with us, the terrified expectation and the anguished remembrance of pain ; yet when every qualification is put forward there remains a vast amount of suffering amongst birds and beasts and fish, most of it unknown in detail to man, and almost all of it, whether seen or guessed at, well calculated to discourage and depress.

At times when the sorrows and the problems and the evil of the world beat in upon us and weigh us down, it is much that, as Christian theists, we are able to remind ourselves that God's love is a wise love. For if it be a wise love, then the universe stands justified. It may be that there is much in it which is baffling and perplexing to our human understandings and which weighs heavily upon our human spirits ; but if we can believe that the universe was fashioned by a creator of infinite love and perfect wisdom, we can legitimately assume that much which we can neither understand nor justify yet serves the purposes of a wise and loving God. We must, however, in this matter exercise a certain caution in our conclusions. We may not, for instance, hastily assume that because God's love is perfectly wise, therefore everything in this world of time and space is now as God would have it be. We are perfectly well aware that there is much in the world around us and much also in our own selves that is not as God would wish it to be ; but we may legitimately conclude, from the fact that it was created, and is sustained, by an all-wise and all-loving God, that the existence of the world, even as it is, is at least better than its non-existence.

It is possible to go even further. Though we do not know if or when the created universe will cease to be, we can deduce from the love and wisdom of its Creator that always it will have been better that the universe should have been than that it should never have come into existence. We can therefore rightly and properly be optimistic with regard to the universe. With all its faults and failings, its blemishes and defects, however caused, its existence is sanctioned by perfect wisdom and perfect love, and therefore it is good that it should be. Even if we make an extreme assumption

and imagine, for instance, that the inhabitants of the earth will steadily deteriorate in character and morals, we must still believe that in ways unknown to us they serve the divine purpose, for the earth and all created things have been called into being by an all-wise and all-loving God, and therefore their existence cannot but be good rather than evil, and pleasing to the Almighty rather than unpleasant in his sight.

To argue thus is not in the least to deny that the world is in many ways not as God would have it be. Man has corrupted the world and changed it in considerable degree from its original goodness, until now it is no small part of the problem of living to discern between God's perfect work and that which has in some degree been marred by the sin and folly of man. It is therefore with an especial satisfaction that the Christian spirit rests in anything which can be regarded as most assuredly the unblemished work of God. Unfortunately, through the weakness and sinfulness of humanity, such objects for our contemplation are few and hard to find. It may be that there are material things which are in all ways as God would have them be, because they have escaped all injury or damage from beings ignorant of, or hostile to, the divine will. We may, for instance, thus think of the sun or the stars, or even, in considerable degree, of the mountains and the seas on our own small planet, though it may be that in a measure these have suffered from the sinfulness of men. But material things can never completely satisfy that which is spiritual, and the spirit of man in its nobler moments quests eagerly for an unspoiled work of the love that is perfect wisdom.

Such a work man's spirit finds supremely in that divine act of giving that made possible, and was, the Incarnation. The coming of the Saviour was the work of perfect love and perfect wisdom, unsullied by any fault or frailty of man. Man might mar the incarnate life, show scorn and hatred where he should have loved and made welcome, but it was not in man's power to injure or spoil the act of giving, 'God so loved the world that he gave,' and the giving was an act of perfect wisdom and perfect love. Contemplating it we know that we see God as he is, not indeed in all the

fullness of his being, that vision can never be possessed by finite man, but we see his heart and, seeing it, adore.

Again, there is yet another divine act which, because man had no power to alter or distort it, we can be certain perfectly displays that love which is all-wise. This second divine act is the Atonement. Men have argued through the centuries and still argue about the nature of the Atonement, and it is fortunate for us that we can make our point without being drawn aside into controversial and inconclusive discussions. All who believe in an Atonement at all, and the Christians are few indeed who do not believe in some kind of an Atonement, though their conceptions of it may vary widely, are certain that it was and is something accomplished and effected by God himself independently of man. Man has indeed to come into relation with the Atonement, to appropriate its blessings and to make it his own, yet the Atonement itself was a divine act accomplished for man and independently of man, a result which, if God had not achieved it, would have remained for ever unrealised. Therefore when Christians contemplate the Atonement, though they may differ in their understanding of its mode, they can be at one in recognising that here also is an unsullied work of the love which is perfect wisdom and of the wisdom which is perfect love, and can bow together in joyous adoration of the God who is all-loving and all-wise.

Though it is hardly necessary to trace all the ways in which the divine love is qualified by the other divine attributes, it will be of service to our study to note the relationship of the divine power to the divine love. God's love is powerful; it can accomplish anything that can be accomplished by infinite love. In the last analysis God's love is the only power there is; ultimately there is no power but the love of God. In the end the love of God conquers or breaks, for it is the supreme power and nothing can finally resist it. God has no power but the power of love, for God is eternally real and there is no power that is eternally real save the power of love. In the temporal sphere it is easy to forget that love is the only real power, for in the temporal sphere we are familiar with other kinds of power which, at least for a season, are strong.

There is the power of the sword or the power of money or the power of intellect, and these and other forms of power seem to accomplish much, not merely without the aid of love, but often in hostility to it. We must not, indeed, be guilty of overstatement. Even in our own world of time and space, marred as it is by past and present sinfulness, love has its triumphs and its victories, and on occasion no other power prevails against it. The earth knows the love of a mother for her child and the love of a man for his friend ; it knows too the love of disinterested service and the love that would seek and save the lost ; and it is aware that, though often love may seem unable to accomplish its desire, yet there is no power upon earth that can bow the spirit of man's love at its highest and its best, nor turn it aside from the course that it has chosen.

Though there may be many who do not understand why human love is so strong the secret is not hidden from the Christian theist. He is well aware that when man loves he is like God, and that when he is like God he begins to approximate to God in strength. When, therefore, man loves nobly, purely, unselfishly, he is, within his finite limits, very like to God ; and because he is like God in love, he possesses also something of the strength of the Almighty. Neither in God nor in man is strength a fortuitous addition to love. In God there is nothing fortuitous, he is strong because he loves, his strength is the inevitable corollary of his love; and in man also strength flows from love, because an all-powerful, all-loving God so appointed it, not by chance or at random, but in accordance with the laws of his own perfect being. He therefore who loves is strong, strong both to achieve and to endure. He has found the cardinal principle of the universe and possessing it cannot go astray. He is a man of power in the created world because in love his spirit is akin to the God who in his all-powerful love brought all things into being.

The supreme demonstration of the power of love within the limits of humanity is of course the life of Jesus. In that life love had free course and therefore in that life there was a strength such as has not otherwise been seen upon the earth. We have alluded earlier to the simplicity of the life of Jesus,

and have pointed out that that life is the easiest of all lives to understand because it is the manifestation of a single principle, the principle of love. But we ought now to note the tremendous strength that is implied by such simplicity. There was, quite literally, no power or force that could turn Jesus aside from the path of love. Many attempts were made, some in malice and some in mistaken kindness, so to turn him. There were relatives who thought him misguided ; there were chosen and trusted followers who at times sought to dissuade him from his purpose ; there were fellow-townsmen who cast him out ; there were religious leaders who scorned his pretensions and hated him for what they accounted his presumption ; there were shrewd scribes and lawyers and cunning politicians who tried to entangle him with artful and malicious questions ; there was a governor, set by an imperial race to administer the law, who sent him to scourging and crucifixion though he found no fault in him ; there was a people who so loathed his presence that to be rid of it they were glad to have his blood upon their heads ; and, more awful because more insidious and nearer to the soul's inmost sanctuary than these outward tempters to hatred and to sin, were forces and powers of evil that ever pressed upon the spirit of Jesus and strove to swerve it from its appointed and self-accepted path.

The opposition, both well-meant and hostile, to Jesus accomplished much. It was strong enough to prevent him from accomplishing much that he would have wished to do ; it made his work difficult and his life often burdensome ; it broke his body on the cross and bowed his spirit in uttermost anguish and distress ; but one thing it did not avail to break ; it could not conquer the love of Jesus, for love is the strongest power in all the universe and, when it is perfect, all else must bend and break before it. The love of Jesus was the love of the Logos manifested within the limits of our humanity. It was a revelation within the limits of time and space of God's eternal love, and the marvel of its achievement in some thirty years of human living has changed the face of the world. Nor as yet is the full story told. There is all the future still to come and it

may be that, if we bring into our survey those as yet far off ages, we are living, as has been said, in the earliest days of the Church. We do not know what triumphs and victories, what humiliations and disappointments, may await the ambassadors of Christianity in the years that are still far away, but we do know, as one of the earliest and greatest Christian ambassadors knew long ago, that 'love never faileth.' Love cannot be conquered or overcome so long as it is true to itself ; compared with love, forces and powers of every kind are weak ; and though love may seem to fail when its measure of success is reckoned by standards that sin has warped, love never fails, but is always supremely triumphant when its achievement is gauged by the standard of that eternal love which is God.

But if love within the limits of humanity is, when perfect, thus triumphantly powerful, we glimpse in some degree the measure of the power of the love of God. In the eternal order the power of the divine love is eternally sovereign, there is no opposition to its rule, no region where its fiat does not run. In God infinite love reigns triumphant, it is not gainsaid nor checked, it sweeps forth in irresistible power and returns unhindered and almighty to itself. In the eternal order alone is existence underived and absolute, and throughout that order love reigns in unchallenged power. It is indeed the power of love that makes existence in the eternal order absolute, for infinite love is the ultimate reality and it in its perfection constitutes and is the eternal order, and upon it depend for being all lesser orders of reality. Infinite love, therefore, has the power of that which is ultimate, its strength is of the essence of reality and its power grounded in eternity of being.

When man in his weakness realises the power of the love of God he is almost overcome by the splendour of the vision. He is sadly familiar upon the earth with love that is weak and dies, with love that is faint and in consequence scanty in achievement, with love that hesitates and falters and lacks decisiveness of aim ; and even though man also is familiar in his earthly life with love that is strong and buoyant and steadfast of heart he knows no love that passes beyond the measures of a man. But when he lifts his eyes

to the love of God he sees absolute power, power unfettered and uncurbed, power that eternally achieves its perfect will. In the presence of this absolute power which is also infinite love man bows himself and worships. He is in the presence of ultimate reality, and he finds it self-existent love which is also self-derived power; and, weak but desiring to be strong, and loving though less fervently than he would, he offers humbly but very gladly his adoration to the God who is infinite and all-powerful Love.

IV

MAN THE WORSHIPPER

WE propose to complete our study of the worshipfulness of God by giving some consideration to his worshipper, man, and by seeking to relate man's worship to the eternal order by showing how it proceeds from God and returns to God. We shall, of course, continue to move within the limits we have observed throughout our enquiry and take only such a view of man as is compatible with Christian theism; and it is hoped also that this concluding chapter will round off the whole study by gathering together and relating to one another points made earlier but not hitherto co-ordinated.

On the Christian view man is a being created by God to know him and to worship him. As a fact of history man has in part fulfilled his destiny for he has always worshipped. But his destiny was for long only partially fulfilled because man failed to worship as he ought. That failure was man's own deliberate fault. He was the child of God by creation; whether we believe man to have been created by the immediate fiat of God or to have come into being as the product of a long period of God-controlled evolution, we cannot as Christian theists suppose that there is anything fortuitous or casual about the fact of man's existence. Man exists because God meant him to exist that he might know and worship his Maker and in that knowledge and worship find his own joy and peace.

But man, though thus the child of God, did not choose to love and serve his Father with his whole heart. In part he served him and in part he turned away from him. Accordingly the love which had made man and given him the glory of the knowledge of God became humanly organic in the world that it had made. The eternal Son of God became man and, as man, brought to men a fresh influx of the love without which no man can serve God as he should. Moreover, when the life of the Son of God was ended upon

earth that Son poured forth by the gift of his Spirit and through the medium of his glorified humanity sacramentally conveyed yet richer blessings of grace and love. The life and death of Jesus and the gift of his Spirit after the Ascension to those who followed him marked the inauguration of a new era. It is not unfitting that Christians express their dates relatively to the birth of Christ, for that birth heralded the coming of a new epoch. The gift that had been possible in humanity's early days and which had never been completely accepted or fully used was offered to man once again. Once more it was possible, for those who would, to be in that relationship to God which alone would realise the glory of their manhood. The life and death of the God-Man had not merely given the inspiration of a perfect example; they had also swept away the barriers that man in his sinfulness had raised between himself and God. The evil of the past was blotted out and in the power of the Spirit of Jesus they who would could go forward to live lives like to his and be in all things well-pleasing unto God.

It is part of the strength of the Christian scheme of salvation that it throughout puts the initiative where it properly belongs, in the realm of absolute reality. It is God who in his love creates; it is God who in his love gives his Son to live and die for men; it is God who gives his Spirit to guide men into the way of peace. Throughout, the initiative comes from God; man may co-operate and so fulfil his destiny, but he cannot in any deep sense originate. And as man cannot originate, so also he cannot prevent the culmination to which the love of God goes forward. The infinite love of God is also infinitely wise and infinitely powerful, and at the goal where it would fain be, there it already is. All that the love of God wills is eternally fulfilled in an instantaneous now. It is not so with man; with him it is first will and then consummation, but all such distinctions are meaningless in God. God is what he wills to be, and in his own being eternally possesses the utter satisfaction of all divine desire.

Yet, because God is infinite love, it is his will that that which eternally is shall also have its copy and its antitype in a lesser order of reality and within the limits of a world

in time and space. That world is fashioned through the agency of the eternal Logos and bears the impress of the everlasting Reason. It has been the dwelling-place of that Logos as incarnate ; the power of God upholds it and sustains it, and the Spirit of God broods over it in love. Therefore, when from the inexhaustible fount of deity the divine love sweeps forth to its perfect object and returns in its infinite perfection whence it came, in a union eternal, unbroken and utterly perfect, man also, if he will, may in his degree share in that great stream of love. For the infinite love of God streams into the temporal order in proportion to its capacity to receive it. That temporal order can never diminish the infinite love of God ; that order is finite, created, limited, and the bounded can never lessen the unbounded ; but according to its need and its capacity the love of God comes to it, and by its coming man is challenged with his destiny. The love that comes from God goes back to God perfect, undiminished, utterly complete ; it is man's glory that, if he will, the divine love may come to him and pass through him on its journey back to God.

The whole Christian scheme of salvation has for its aim the drawing man into the perfect circle of the divine love. The world was made, Christ lived and died, the Holy Spirit came, in order that the divine love, which in the eternal order passes eternally from God to God and back again to God, might also in the temporal order have passage through the souls of men. The aim of the Christian is to increase the love in his life. If we are growing in love, we know we are not failing ; our lives are a success if they are more full of love than they were ; for us the art of living is the practice of loving. The love which we seek to practise is not narrow in its scope ; we desire to love God with all our hearts and our neighbours as ourselves. But in proportion as we know ourselves, both as we are and as we ought to be, we are conscious that only by the divine aid can we love as we ought to love. Love must come into our hearts from God before there can go forth from our hearts the love that God would fain receive. God, being love, is a great giver ; they who ask him for love never ask in vain ; the gift awaits them even before they ask it.

But when the divine love sweeps into the Christian heart it acquires a differentia before it returns whence it came. In the eternal order the love that comes from God goes back to God as love still, utterly unchanged, but in the temporal order the love that comes from God acquires a new quality in its passage through the soul of man, and goes back to God as worship. Worship is God's love returning to God through the medium of created souls. We desire to emphasise this definition and to draw out some of its implications, because to do so will, as we think, save us from certain dangers that are not always avoided when Christians speak of worship. In the first place, the definition reminds us of the infinite gulf between God and ourselves. We are created beings, and when we offer our love to our Creator we offer it not as to an equal, but to a God who surpasses us to an extent that no comparison can illustrate, for all comparisons must be drawn from the realm of created things, and the greatest difference in that realm is as nothing compared with the difference between man and God. Our love, then, being offered to God, acquires a distinctive quality from the infinite worth of the object to which it is directed, it has in it a note of lowly humility, a note of awe, a note of glad surrender, a note of loving adoration.

It is possible, of course, and no doubt sometimes desirable, for purposes of theological analysis or homiletic exposition, to speak of man's love for God with little recollection of the gulf that separates the created from the Creator, or of the effects of this gulf upon the relation of man to his Maker. But it must be insisted that thus to speak is to speak abstractly and, unless the abstraction is remembered, to speak dangerously. Whatever may be permissible in discussion or argument, in practice it is never legitimate to presume to love God with that easiness of approach and familiarity of intercourse that would be fitting and proper in the case of a well-loved friend. There must always be the note of humility and awe and adoration in man's love of God; in other words, the proper attitude of man to God is an attitude of worship.

We are not in the least denying that love is an integral and important element in worship, as worship is understood

by Christian theists. So far are we from attempting any such denial that we should insist that there is no true worship without love. Humility and awe in the presence of the divine do not constitute worship, essential elements though they are in all worship ; but if love be added to the humility and the awe, then there is worship. Humility and awe without love are the fitting attitude for a created being in the presence of a Creator who remains entirely external and with whom he has no inward union of spirit ; love without humility and awe is seemly between brethren, though even then there must be reverence for personality ; but love offered to God without humility and awe is impertinent and presumptuous, the offensive assertiveness of a creature who has forgotten both his creatureliness and the unspeakable glory of the God who made him.

It might be urged by some who would prefer a more friendly and familiar attitude towards God than we ourselves advocate that, in our insistence upon awe and humility in all our intercourse with God, we have forgotten that the Son of God in his life on earth gave as the first commandment that a man should love the Lord his God with all his heart and soul and mind and strength, and that nothing was added about humility and awe. To such a criticism it would be fitting to reply under two heads. In the first place, those who knew Jesus and had had opportunity of observing his profound reverence in all that concerned the things of God, would never have supposed that he was inculcating an easy fellowship or a relationship on equal terms between man and God. In the second place, those to whom Jesus spoke were Jews, and the Jews of our Lord's day had a sense of the grandeur and the glory and the unspeakable greatness of God which is sadly lacking in many Christian circles to-day. The Jews failed when they approached the divine in the time of Christ, not in awe and humility, but in love ; and when they asked him for advice, the perfect Teacher told them of their failing. He did not emphasise what they already knew ; had he done so, he would not have been the perfect Teacher that he was.

We can help forward our enquiry into the proper attitude for man to adopt towards God, and also give a certain

concreteness to that enquiry, by considering the legitimacy of a phrase often found in Christian places of worship. When in a church anything from a window to a litany-desk is solemnly set apart for God's service and it is thought fit that it should bear some form of inscription, that inscription quite commonly begins with the phrase 'To the greater glory of God', either in English or in a Latin equivalent. It is possible to ask whether such a phrase is seemly. On the one hand, it is fitting that things which are in an especial sense used for God's glory should be appropriately denoted. It is no doubt true that the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; but we are so constituted that most of us, at least, are more likely to remember that everything is God's, if we carefully and conscientiously remember that certain things are. Also it is probably true that to use a piece of oak for a litany-desk instead of making it into a door for a house is a more direct means of promoting the glory of God. It is, of course, perfectly possible to use the doors of our houses to the honour and glory of God, and it is very desirable that we should, but, being as we are, we are more likely to use litany-desks in this way than doors.

On the other hand, it may be urged that the use of phrases of this kind is pathetic evidence of our failure really to grasp the true nature of God or to have the faintest perception of his infinite glory. If we realised but slightly the glory of God we should be horrified at the least hint that any work of man's hands could add to that glory. It is not a question of using only the best in God's service, or of the avoidance of the ugly and the pretentious. It is a question whether anything that man can give or make, or all the things together that man can give and make, can add anything to the glory of God. To that question the answer is not really difficult. The infinite God abides unmoved in the glory of perfect love. The Three in One and the One in Three are perfect excellence and utter beauty, glorious with the glory of infinite love. Nothing can take away from their glory, and nothing add to it, for there is nothing that is real with their order of reality. There are, indeed, lesser orders of reality, but these owe such reality as is theirs to the primal ultimate reality, and upon that reality they can neither

trespass nor intrude. Therefore, if in these lesser orders of reality there be that which has real beauty or true glory, that beauty and that glory come from God, and if, as they should be, they are humbly and lovingly offered back to him, they can add nothing to his beauty and his glory, for they have but returned whence they came. It is good that man should rear in God's honour the noblest buildings that he has power to build, and deck them with the most beauteous and costly gifts that artist can design and craftsman fashion ; but also it is good that when all is done man should remember that he but returns to God what God has given, and that he has added nothing to that eternal self-existent glory which is God in his infinite perfection. The noblest cathedrals that man has built are but humble gestures acknowledging God's glory ; and they best use them who allow their beauty, their glory and their grandeur to be reminders of One in whom alone are all beauty, all glory, and all grandeur, and who in his love accepts the offerings of men not because they add anything to his own infinite perfection, but because such acceptance makes glorious our humanity.

All the accompaniments of our worship, therefore, and our worship itself, are not adding anything to the perfection of God, nor making up for any lack or defect in his being. God would not be worshipful at all if he were in any sense incomplete, defective, inadequate. It is because he is himself absolute and unqualified perfection that he is worshipful. We give him our love because he himself is infinite utter love, and the love that we have for him is really his love for himself. It is that fact that made the Incarnation possible without injury or wrong to the divine being, and which before the Incarnation had made creation possible. The love of the Father goes forth eternally to the Son, and eternally returns from the Son to the Father ; but the Son is the Logos or Reason or Word of God, and that Word has expressed himself in creation. All, therefore, that has been created and that has remained as the Word made it, partakes of the love that comes forth from the Father to the Son and returns from the Son to the Father. They who are in the Son are also in the Father's love for the Son and in the Son's love to his Father.

We can therefore faintly understand the possibility of the Incarnation. The Son, as incarnate, was but reproducing within the limits of time and space and at the level of history the life that was his eternally. In the eternal order the love of the Father for the Son sweeps back eternally from the Son to the Father ; in the temporal order the love of the incarnate Logos sweeps back to the Father as the worship of Jesus. Jesus is the Logos within the limits of humanity, and because within those limits the Logos is and remains perfect man, he has, as perfect man, his place in the perfect work of the eternal Logos as creative. But that, which has retained its place in the Son's perfect creative work and not forfeited that place by any failure or defect, has fulfilled the law of its being, and is in perfect harmony with the Reason or Mind of God, and within that Reason or Mind shares in the love that flows eternally from the Father to the Son, and from the Son to the Father, in a stream which is itself Spirit and eternal Love. It is therefore correct to say that the love of Jesus was the love of God for God, expressed within the limits of humanity, and within those limits becoming worship. But at the eternal level the love that came from God to God returned whence it came, unaltered and unchanged, as love and not as worship, for the Son is the equal of the Father, save only that he is eternally begotten, and his love, like the love of the Father, is divine.

As it was with Jesus so also it is with us. There are indeed apparent differences. There is first the difference of personality. We are created persons, Jesus was not. He was an eternal, pre-existent being living within the limits of humanity. He began to be as a human person, but as a divine person he had no beginning. Secondly, Jesus lived a perfect human life, we do not ; and the consequences of this second fact are much more serious than the consequences of the first. For since because of our own free choice we do not always live as we know we ought to live, the love of God has not free course in us. The perfect human life offers no obstacle to the sweep of God's love. The divine love comes to it, passes through it, and returns to God without let or hindrance. We are not indeed to suppose that any human life, or all human lives together, can provide

an object adequate to God's infinite love, nothing created could do that ; but human lives are not in themselves the direct object of the love that streams from the Father, they are the objects of that love in proportion as they are in the Son. It is the Son who alone is the object adequate to the Father's love, and we share in that love so far as we are in the Son.

In one sense all men are in the Son, for it is by his creative agency that they exist at all. To this extent also all men receive the Father's love. But we are called to be in the Son of God in a much fuller and richer sense than is implied by the fact of our creation. There is, after all, an element of externality about creation ; it is possible to be a created being and to be ignorant of the fact ; but we are called to be self-consciously in the Son, in him purposefully, willingly, gladly. The whole Christian scheme of salvation might be not inaptly expressed as an attempt to keep men within the Son, or to bring them back within the Son if they have left their divine dwelling-place. It is, of course, within the Son as eternal that we must abide, but we are brought to him through his life in the temporal sphere. It is the Son, as incarnate, who brings men to be with him as he is in the eternal order of his being. When we are as Jesus was, when we accept the gift of his glorified humanity which he longs to give, and when by diligent use of all the appointed means of grace we keep that gift secure and safe, then we shall have our inmost being where it was always meant to be, within the eternal Logos, and in him receive and return eternal love.

We must, however, carefully remember that we ourselves cannot transcend the limits of humanity. It is our glory both that we can understand that, when we love God as we ought, we love him with a love that is his own ; and also that, in a limited degree, we can ourselves experience that we are loving with the love of God, or that God is loving himself in and through us ; yet we must not suppose that our consciousness of God's love is identical with God's consciousness of that love. We may feel the divine love in us, but its quality for us is not what it is for God. God's love is only fully known to God. We cannot love God as God loves himself, and we miss our destiny if we make the

attempt. In us the love of God goes back to God as worship ; and worship, though love is an integral element in it, is qualitatively different from love. Nor can we suppose that we shall ever love God as God loves himself. So long as we are we, that is so long as we retain our personal identity, our relation to God can never be the same as God's relation to himself. Unless we are utterly absorbed in some pantheistic fashion in God, our love for God ought never to be just simply love, but to have in it those elements of awe and humility and creatureliness that turn love into worship. And if we imagine, what it is not legitimate for Christian theists to imagine, some such pantheistic absorption taking place, our contention is still not refuted, for though our love may then remain love and be under no obligation to become worship, it is no longer *our* love for our personal identities have been lost in deity.

It is important to notice what occurs when the love that comes from the Father to the Son and returns from the Son to the Father encounters sin in man. Ideally the divine love passes through man back to God from whom it came. But in proportion as man is sinful the divine love cannot pass through him. This does not mean that the divine love is in any way checked or thwarted in its eternal course ; eternally it sweeps from the Father to the Son and back from the Son to the Father ; but the meaning of sin is that the divine love does not embrace the sinner in its course. The divine love returns unchecked to the Father, but it has not known in the temporal order the transition into worship. To the extent that the divine love has not known that transition, the temporal order has failed to fulfil its destiny. When I sin I do not lessen the eternal love nor detract from the glory of God, but I deprive myself of my own glory. My glory is to worship God, and I cannot worship him if I do not suffer his love to come within my heart, for his love, passing within the limits of my createdness, becomes my worship. When I sin I mar the harmony of the universe, but I do not mar the harmony of the perfect being of God. My worship adds nothing to God, but the absence of it takes a great deal from me. The curse of sin is not that it injures God, but that it injures man.

The statement that we have just made is so contrary alike to popular theology and to popular preaching that it will be well to amplify it somewhat. The real trouble with much theology that finds acceptance and much preaching that gains a hearing is that they are incurably anthropocentric. Man occupies the centre of their thought, and all else is grouped in relation to man. It is possible to construct pictures of the universe on this fashion ; their most serious blemish is that they do not correspond to reality. In reality God is the centre, and all else must be arranged around him. Moreover, it is only the centre of the circle that is utterly and absolutely real ; that which is disposed around the centre possesses only derived and secondary being. Now because the centre of the circle is infinite love it can only fail if it fails in love. God injures himself if he suffers his love to diminish ; God is injured if his love is lessened from without. But man's sin does not lessen God's love ; it diminishes in a sense the area of its activity, but love is not lessened by being shut out, it is only lessened when it ceases to seek to enter. The awfulness of sin is not that it diminishes the love of God, it neither does nor can ; nor that it detracts from the divine glory, it neither does nor can ; but it is the terribleness of sin that it robs beings, who were created to receive the love of God in their hearts and to return it as worship to the Giver, of the glory of their destiny and leaves them in the pathetic and futile loneliness of a less than human self-centredness.

We may make our position still clearer if we take note of a possible objection. There might be those who would suggest that a God is not really worshipful who is untroubled by our sins ; and they might even seek to impale us upon the horns of a dilemma, by urging that either our sins do not matter very much or that, if they do, it is a blemish in God that he remains unmoved by them. We should begin our reply to our critics by pointing out that there may be things which matter, and which ought to matter, very much to me, but which may be of little or no moment to God. To argue as if the importance of a thing for me necessarily depended upon its importance for God is to argue as if the created and the Creator were identical. The duties of a little child are

defined for it by its earthly father, and it is most important that the little child should be conscientious in their discharge ; but the duties of the child's father are not the same as the duties of the child, because he occupies a very different status in the world. At the same time an earthly father is distressed if his child fails to carry out the directions he has given him, and if he does not respond in love to paternal guidance given in love ; and the father does his best to rouse his child's love and to win him to the path which he counts most likely to bring him happiness and blessing.

Similarly with God. There is a sense in which it is not true to say that God remains unmoved by our sins. Within the temporal order he is moved by them in the sense that, being what they are, they help to determine the manifestations of his eternal love within the temporal order. God himself in the eternal order never changes ; in that order he is infinite perfect love, all-holy, all-righteous and all-good. But to those within the temporal order he seems to change because his love and holiness and righteousness and goodness manifest themselves in different ways according to their needs and characters. Within the temporal order these changes are real changes, they are not within that order mere appearances ; it is only when we view them under the higher order of eternity that we can see that they possess a less degree of reality, and that whilst real in their own sphere they are at least very largely, and perhaps entirely, unreal in the eternal realm.

The Christian apologist need not greatly distress himself if he cannot succeed in so relating the eternal and the temporal as to leave no room for the thrusts of the logician and the philosopher. He must, of course, strive to the utmost of his power to make his conclusions proof against their attacks ; and so far as those attacks reveal real weaknesses he should be grateful for them and turn them to good account ; but he need not concern himself unduly if he cannot construct a system that offers no loophole for dialectical attack. He may legitimately point out, first, that the logicians and philosophers, in spite of much arduous and brilliant work, have not yet themselves succeeded in constructing any such impregnable system ; and secondly,

and more importantly, the Christian apologist may insist that life is wider than logic and in more extensive contact with reality, and that if Christianity is a way of life in accordance with which millions are content to live and die, and if also a reasonably adequate philosophic defence can be produced on its behalf, then Christian apologists may be content if Christianity, as a system of thought as distinct from a way of life, is, like every other known system of thought, still vulnerable to a few logical thrusts. After all, if an infinite God be, as Christians believe, the ultimate reality, our finite intellects ought not to expect to be able to construct a neat scheme of thought which will include such a God and all his works with a convenient compactness.

The primary problem of life is not thinking but living, though thinking is, of course, an extremely important part of living. But the living is wider than the thinking, and it is therefore, for instance, more important for the Christian theist to relate his life correctly to God than it is to relate his thinking. It is perfectly true that if the thinking be erroneous the life cannot in all respects be correctly related to God; it is also perfectly true that the thinking may be profoundly accurate and yet the life be not pleasing in God's sight. But if the life be correctly related to God, its thinking also is accurate, for the greater includes the less, and though there may be perfect thinking without perfect living, there is no perfect life without perfect thought. Moreover, it is to be noticed that perfect thought takes its definition from perfect life and not *vice versa*. Perfect thinking is the thinking that is necessary in any individual instance for perfection of life, but perfect living cannot be defined as the kind of life that is necessary for perfect thinking. It may indeed be that, but it is also as much more than that as life is more than thinking.

Now because life is more than thought and has a wider contact with reality, it will never be possible to bring the whole of life within the domain of thought. Yet life can continue with perfect success, though thought may never succeed in making life entirely its own. This fact is notably illustrated in Christianity. Christianity not infrequently solves in life problems which are insoluble to thought.

The relation of grace to freewill, for instance, is a hard problem for the reflective theologian, but in actual living it offers no especial difficulty. We can solve in experience what we cannot resolve in thought. Similarly with sin. It is quite easy in thought to construct dilemmas such as the one we have been considering, that either our sins do not matter very much or that, if they do, it is a blemish in God that he remains unmoved by them. That dilemma can in part be met by argument, but it is only in living that we really find it to be a thing of no account. In Christian experience, that is to say in our experience of God as revealed through Christ, we feel two things at least in relation to sin which are perhaps not reconcilable in thought, but are common enough together in experience. In the presence of the love of God we feel the horrible loathsomeness of our sin ; and we feel also how utterly impossible it is that that sin should in any way impinge upon, or make the faintest impression upon, the perfect purity and holiness of God. Nay more, we do not merely feel this impossibility ; we rejoice that it is an impossibility. To suppose that our sin horrid, loathsome, defiling, could, as it were, strike into God and penetrate his being, is agony to us just in proportion as we realise both the nature of sin and the nature of God. Logically it may perhaps be a contradiction to think that sin matters profoundly and also that it has no power to affect the being of God ; yet we would venture to assert that such a contradiction, if it be a contradiction, is a frequent experience in the life of the Christian believer, and that in that life it is not felt as a contradiction, but as a vital element in a true Christian experience.

To some extent, indeed, we can resolve the difficulty for thought if we are careful to start our thinking, not with man's sin, but with God's love. The ultimate reality and the only true reality is infinite love. Nothing can change that love, but there are those who are allowed, if they will to do so, to partake of it and share in it. They are created beings, and such sharing is a destiny far beyond their intrinsic worth as created. It is in their power to accept or to refuse their destiny ; when they accept, they worship ; when they refuse, they sin ; but neither the worship nor the

sin affects or changes the being of God. These points have been made and developed earlier ; we recall them now in summary fashion to show that it is not necessarily inconsistent to feel both the awfulness of sin and its inability to affect the divine being. Sin is awful, not because it affects God, but because it affects man. Sin paralyses worship, and worship is the whole destiny of man. When he worships, man is in the stream of the divine love, and enters upon life eternal ; when he sins, man withdraws himself from that stream, and turns his face towards the everlasting darkness. As there can be nothing more dreadful than that which separates from the love of God ; so there can be nothing more awful than sin, which is the ruin and damnation of man. Yet even the awfulness of sin can be exaggerated, and is exaggerated, by those moralists and teachers who, doubtless with the best intentions, proclaim that sin has its effects upon the divine being and is a grievous wound to infinite love. Sin can destroy the created, if the created wills to be destroyed ; but let us thank God that it has no power to touch the Creator and that Love is still Lord of Eternity.

Our study of the divine worshipfulness may be brought to a close by the twofold recognition that the duty and privilege of worship covers the whole of life, and also that all human worship, though it may be perfect in its degree, is never more than partial and one-sided. We defined worship as God's love returning to God through the medium of created souls. In proportion as we have the love of God in our hearts, our lives will be all worship. There will be in them nothing that is not an expression of God's love in terms of humanity. As we know, this ideal was once actualised in history. In the life of Jesus the love of God returned to God through the medium of humanity, and in that humanity was expressed as perfect worship. The whole conscious life of Jesus can be expressed in terms of worship, precisely because his whole conscious life was an act of worship. Or, if we will, we may say that that life was a succession of acts of worship ; it matters little whether we speak of an act or of a succession of acts, for either was the outward expression of the inward worshipping spirit.

Jesus was careful to offer much conscious and deliberate

worship to God, both for its own sake and also because it is only by deliberate self-conscious worship that the spirit of worship can be kept alive in the heart and permeate the life. Man, being finite, cannot consciously recollect many things at once ; there are various forms of activity which, for their due discharge, call for the utmost concentration, and if man wishes to perform those activities in a certain spirit, he must consciously set himself in that spirit before actually entering upon them. Once the actual activity has engaged his attention it will be impossible for him to consider the spirit in which he is discharging it. Such, for instance, must often have been the case in the life of Jesus as a carpenter. No doubt there was much in the ordinary routine work of the carpenter's shop that Jesus could do perfectly whilst his soul was consciously directed in worship towards God ; but, both whilst he was learning his trade and later, when from time to time intricate tasks called for accomplishment, it was only possible for Jesus to do his work to the honour and glory of God, that is to say, to do it in a worshipping spirit, because he deliberately so set his soul in quiet times of prayer and adoration.

The Christian will be wise to follow the example of his Master, and to seek by careful, deliberate worship, both corporate and individual, so to fill his life with the spirit of worship, that he is worshipping when he is not actually conscious of the fact. There is nothing difficult in this conception, though our unfortunate tendency to think mainly of organised public worship when the word 'worship' is mentioned, suggests that there is. The mother performing some difficult, complex task in the service of her child is loving him all the time, though the intricacy of her work prevents her from having that fact in the forefront of her consciousness ; the surgeon, who in love for humanity chose medicine as his career, is not conscious that he is spending himself in the service of his fellow-men as he performs some difficult and delicate operation, yet none the less he is offering himself in service to humanity, and will continue to do his work in that spirit, provided that in his quiet moments and leisure periods there is frequent rededication of himself to the cause that he has chosen. But the practice of medicine

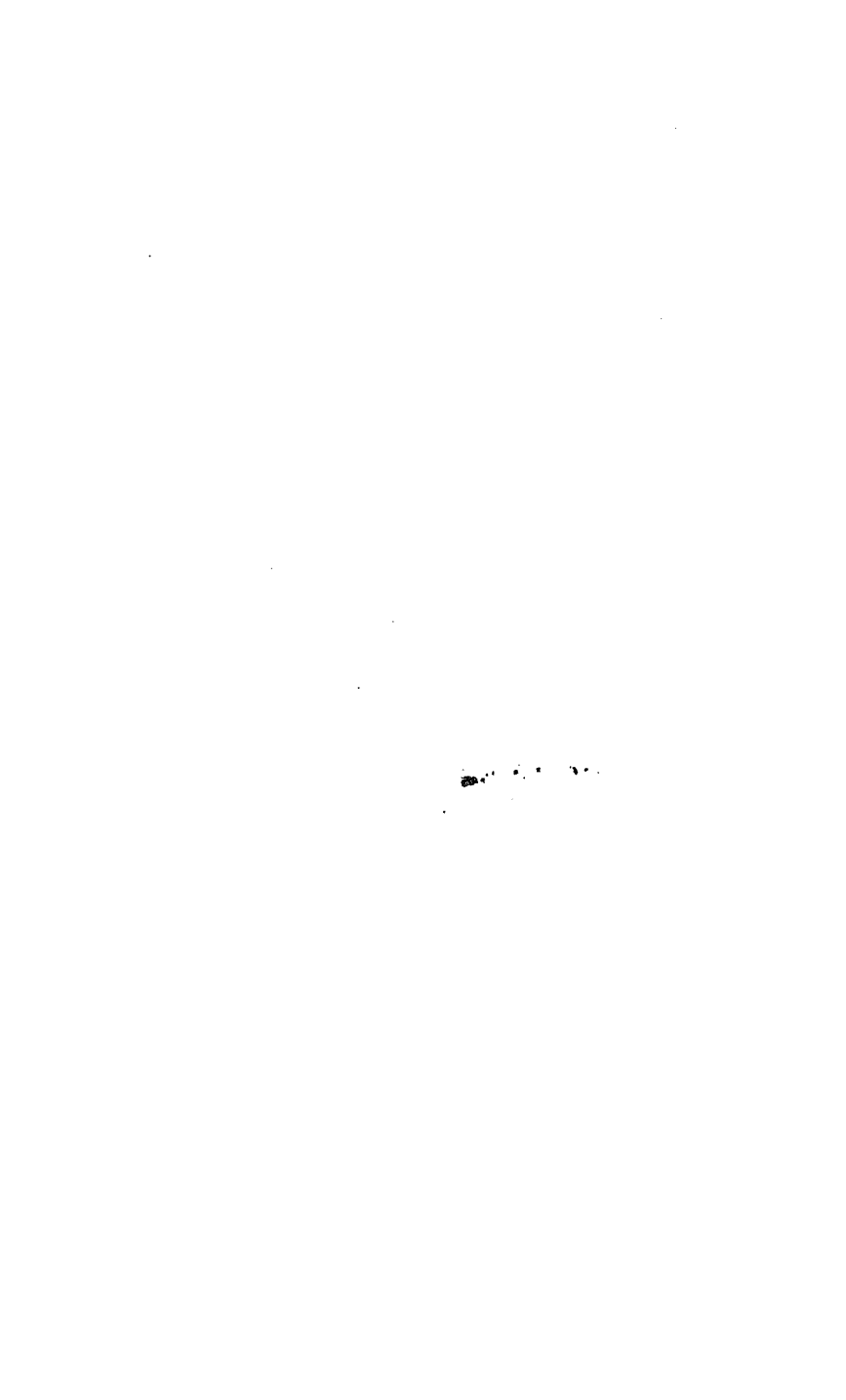
or the love of children are not in themselves sufficient to cover the whole of any individual life. No one can spend the whole of life functioning either as a doctor or as a child-lover. But every human being can spend the whole of life worshipping. For there is nothing in life that cannot be met with the spirit of divine love in our hearts, and God's love in the heart of created beings shows itself as the spirit of worship, that spirit which in lowly awe and humble love tries to think and do and be in accordance with the will of God, and which, in this sense, views all things *sub specie æternitatis*.

But because worship is God's love returning to God through the medium of created souls, it will vary in many ways with the individual. For created souls are not uniform ; we all start with something given, and the gift varies. God requires that we should all worship him ; he is aware that we cannot all worship him in the same way. It is his will that the spirit of worship should fill the lives of us all ; but it is not his will that our lives should be identical in detail. We worship him, if we fulfil our destiny, in and through the life to which we are called ; but we are not all called to the same life. It is the duty of us all to allow the divine love to flow into our hearts and to offer it back to God as worship. But the divine love is infinite whilst our hearts are finite. Only in part can we receive the divine love, and because our hearts vary, we differ one from another in that which we receive of the divine love. Because we differ as created beings, we do not all perceive the divine love in the same way. We have differing fields of vision, and one man's light is another's darkness. For one it is this attribute of the divine being that most deeply stirs him and fills his life with worship ; for another that same attribute has but little appeal, but some other feature of the divine being touches his soul and makes him long to live his life for God. The voice of God is neither changeful in tone nor uncertain in utterance, but in part it is beyond the compass of human hearing, and man, hearing it but partially, can only in part make response.

Yet man's response may be perfect in its degree. Man's heart can never receive in its fullness the infinite love of God ;

but man can render back in worship all the love that God has given him ; and, when man so lives, his life is perfect, and he has fulfilled his destiny as a created being. In lowly humility he has not presumed to wonder why his gifts are not greater than they are, nor dared to exult, because perhaps they seem richer than another's ; such as they are, he has thankfully accepted them and striven to offer them at their best to God. In awe and wondering reverence he has remembered his creatureliness ; he has not sought to measure God by the standard of his own createdness, but has tried to judge himself by the standards God has given him, and has understood that it is the marvel of his createdness that he can have at least partial knowledge of a Creator to whom he cannot give and from whom he cannot take away. Finally, in love he has adored, utterly, completely, holding nothing back ; and the divine love which has filled his life with worship takes him for ever as its own, and though for a season he still walks amidst things temporal, he is eternally a worshipper in the presence of the Worshipful.

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